



# General Assembly

Sixty-fifth session

First Committee

**12**<sup>th</sup> meeting

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Official Records

*Chair:* Mr. Koterec ..... (Slovakia)

*The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.*

## Agenda items 88 to 104 (continued)

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

**The Chair:** In accordance with our programme of work, the Committee will take up the disarmament machinery cluster, beginning with a panel discussion. I would like to welcome our panellists here today: His Excellency Mr. Anatole Fabien Marie Nkou, President of the Conference on Disarmament; His Excellency Mr. Jean-François Régis Zinsou, Chairman of the Disarmament Commission, and Ms. Theresa Hitchens, Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research.

I will first give our panellists the floor, and invite them to kindly limit their statements to no longer than 10 to 15 minutes if possible. Thereafter we will switch to an informal mode to afford delegations the opportunity to put questions to them.

I begin by inviting His Excellency Anatole Fabien Marie Nkou, President of the Conference on Disarmament, to make a statement to the Committee.

**Mr. Nkou** (Conference on Disarmament) (*spoke in French*): As this is the first time I am taking the floor here in this large room, I would like to begin by expressing to you, Sir, my sincere and warm congratulations on your election to your important post

and your skill in conducting our discussions and work. I would also like to express my gratitude for this opportunity to share my reflections on the Conference on Disarmament. I will be all the more sensitive in how I go about this as I am the last President of the Conference on Disarmament for this year, and I will endeavour to remain in the service of this great cause until 24 January 2011.

As members are aware, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon convened the very timely High-level Meeting on Revitalizing the Work of the Conference on Disarmament and Taking Forward Multilateral Disarmament Negotiations on 24 September. Conference members engaged in a renewed debate on our unique disarmament body, which has been in a deadlock for the past 12 years. They undertook to address the question of the most extensive disarmament architecture in the world. These discussions continue and are intensifying. They have taken place not only within the Conference on Disarmament, but also within the First Committee. These discussions have given us greater clarity on the views of the Member States, which have also had the chance to articulate their differences on crucial matters regarding the disarmament machinery and the Conference on Disarmament. If I may, I would like to briefly summarize some of these differences.

First, there are different perceptions on the causes of the current impasse in the multilateral negotiations. Many States highlight the deficiencies of the existing disarmament machinery and stress the urgent need for reform. Others, however, attribute this state of affairs to a lack of political will to resolve the stalemate in

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multilateral negotiations, arguing that nothing is wrong with the disarmament machinery.

Secondly, there are opposing views on the working methods of the Conference on Disarmament. Some Member States question the Conference's rules of procedure, especially its so-called consensus rule and the annual adoption of a programme of work. There is also a growing perception that certain States are using the stalemate to question the very substance of the consensus rule and to use it practically to veto negotiations, insisting on consensus and issues of procedure. Other States believe that the rules of procedure have served the Conference on Disarmament very well and stress the need to preserve its consensus rule. They maintain that the current deadlock derives not from the rules of procedure but from political problems outside the Conference.

Thirdly, there remain diverging views on the substantive work of the Conference on Disarmament. The majority of the Conference supports an immediate commencement of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other explosive nuclear devices. A minority is categorically opposed to such negotiations, and many States have expressed their support for negotiations on nuclear disarmament, preventing an arms race in outer space and negative security assurances.

Fourthly, there is no agreement on how to deal with the current stalemate in multilateral disarmament negotiations. Many Member States support the convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament in order to revitalize the work of the Conference on Disarmament and take forward multilateral disarmament negotiations, but once again, not everyone supports the convening of the special session. Some States propose, rather, to set a deadline for the Conference on Disarmament to start its substantive work, or to resort to alternative arrangements outside the Conference, especially for the negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. However, other States oppose such innovative proposals, which they believe would undermine the existing disarmament machinery. Regrettably, there are even different views as to how to follow up on the High-level Meeting of 24 September.

Despite significant differences in views among Member States, I am nevertheless optimistic that they will be able to bridge these differences and overcome

the current deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament in order to revitalize multilateral disarmament. There is greater convergence than divergence of views on the most fundamental questions concerning multilateral disarmament and the Conference on Disarmament.

Member States also agree that multilateralism must remain the core basis for negotiations in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. They agree that the momentum in disarmament was generated by the goal of achieving a world free from nuclear weapons and that the political will to advance the disarmament agenda has been strengthened in recent years. They also believe that promoting disarmament could help to address other, even more critical challenges, including poverty reduction and combating climate change. Member States acknowledge that the current status of the disarmament machinery, particularly the stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament, is of serious concern. They strongly believe that the Conference on Disarmament must urgently fulfil its mandate as the only multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, and that if the impasse persists, it will hurt its credibility and even its effectiveness.

In order to break the deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament, its members must take collective action next year. In this respect, they should consider the suggestion made by the Secretary-General to adopt a programme of work based on the 2009 programme of work or any similar proposal for the 2011 session. I would therefore urge all Conference members to seriously consider the suggestions made on Wednesday by the Director-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, which include applying the rules of procedure more flexibly, particularly on procedural matters, or starting negotiations in plenary meetings without formally adopting a programme of work. Those are the views of the Director-General of the Conference on Disarmament, for the Committee's reflection.

The Committee heard a strong message from our political leaders on 24 September — the Conference on Disarmament must resume its substantive work and start negotiations as soon as possible. The Conference on Disarmament does not exist in its own universe. I believe that the way it is perceived by the international community will be key to the future of disarmament. The Conference should remain focused on global objectives that are entirely universal and within its

reach. It is a unique place where members negotiate disarmament treaties for all the countries of the world. It is not a place where they exchange points of view or where debates are held, as in other places.

The Conference on Disarmament should adopt and always keep in mind a new methodology and approach. In particular, it should know how to ensure that the security of all States is guaranteed. Everyone is expecting the Conference to take courageous action. That requires collective action and strong decision-making by the members of the Conference. Continuing with the current inaction would undermine not only the credibility of the Conference, but its very future and the peace and security of the world.

**The Chair:** I thank Ambassador Nkou for his statement and for his kind words addressed to me and other officers of the Committee.

I now give the floor to the Chairman of the Disarmament Commission, His Excellency Mr. Jean-Francis Régis Zinsou, to make a statement to the Committee.

**Mr. Zinsou** (Benin), Chairman of the Disarmament Commission (*spoke in French*): I, too, would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee.

As Chairman of the Disarmament Commission, I am very pleased to take part in this panel. I wish to recall that the Disarmament Commission was one of the most important bodies of the League of Nations and was remarkably successful in discharging its mandate. The Commission was re-established in 1952, during the very first years of the United Nations, as a body of the Security Council, in accordance with Article 26 of the Charter. The Commission was re-established at the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament held in 1978.

During the 1990s, the Commission showed remarkable effectiveness in discharging its mandate. It unanimously adopted over 15 texts concerning principles, guidelines and recommendations, and it made recommendations concerning the items on its agenda. These documents were the subject of a memorable compilation, put together by the Secretary-General at the behest of the General Assembly and contained in document A/51/182 of 1 July 1996.

As part of its revitalization process, the General Assembly adopted decision 52/492 in 1998, stipulating

that, starting from the year 2000, the annual substantive session of the Commission would run for three weeks, that its agenda would usually cover two substantive issues per year, one of which would concern nuclear disarmament, and that one substantive issue would have to be covered over the course of three years. The decision allowed for a third issue to be included if there was a consensus on that subject. That occurred in 2006, when the Commission was also seized of the issue of working methods, in addition to the two other issues meeting the criteria mentioned earlier. The Commission considered three issues, addressing the third in a plenary meeting, under the guidance of the Commission's Chairman. The two other issues were conferred to the two working groups that were created. We thus overcame the difficulty inherent in the fact that the working groups of the Commission were not to meet simultaneously, under the relevant provisions of the aforementioned decision.

The three-year cycle under way is therefore considering three substantive issues, which, by their nature, require the creation of three working groups. During the first two years, only two working groups convened: Working Group I on recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, under the chairmanship of Italy; and Working Group II on elements of a draft declaration of the 2010s as the fourth disarmament decade, under the chairmanship of South Africa.

The third substantive issue is entitled "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons". It was agreed in 2009 that this item will be taken up upon the conclusion of the elements of a draft declaration of the 2010s as the fourth disarmament decade, preferably by 2010 and in any case no later than 2011.

When I was elected Chairman of the Commission, my first concern was to intensify consultations with the member States to conclude, during the 2010 session, the definition of the elements for the declaration. My approach was driven by the international context and the status of the issue, the consideration of which during the first year of the cycle capitalized on the remarkable progress made in 2008 on the two substantive issues considered during the previous cycle. All seemed to be going well at the beginning of the 2010 session. Indeed, the level of agreement reached on subjects concerning the elements

allowed us to objectively finalize the work on these elements and thereby to create the conditions necessary for having on the agenda of the session of the third year of the cycle only two items regarding, first, nuclear weapons, and secondly, confidence-building measures on conventional weapons.

Moreover, with respect to the international context, the entire world was euphoric with the advent of a new United States Administration that visibly gave high priority to promoting disarmament and had given clear signals to that end, provoking a thaw in negotiations with the Russian Federation for the conclusion of new disarmament agreements.

I was not alone in thinking that this positive development would allow the Commission, independently of any other considerations, to develop a collective vision expressing the aspirations and expectations of our peoples, which were to be included in the elements required for the declaration of the fourth disarmament decade.

However, all delegations did not share the same sense of urgency and opportunity on this issue. Due to the absence of political will on the part of a small minority of countries, the work of the Commission took place in a sombre climate, and we reached the end of the session with texts laden with obstructive amendments that not only drew us further from reaching agreement but also jeopardized the hopes for a positive conclusion of the cycle.

I would like to urge all members to work in a conciliatory and flexible manner during the 2011 session in order to find, within the Commission, the formulas required for consensus, which we need in order to serve the general interest. That is the price we must pay to successfully conclude the cycle under way.

I have been associated with the work of the Commission over the past five years at various levels of responsibility. In that context and in the interest of the debate, I would like to reflect on the reasons for its inability to conclude its work over the past decade with tangible results, as it did in the 1990s. I have identified two stumbling blocks that have prevented the successful culmination of the Commission's efforts: its decision-making approach and its calendar of sessions in the disarmament timetable.

The first issue is the decision-making process. A number of delegations used and abused the consensus

concept, as was the case in the Conference on Disarmament, using it as a veto right. This enabled some delegations to not only block the adoption of texts, but even to prevent their inclusion in the Commission's final report. This adversely affected multilateralism and undermined the credibility of the Commission and, beyond that, of the United Nations as a whole. In that respect, the Commission must be governed by the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, which created it. The mere possibility of adopting texts by vote would create an incentive for delegations with views other than those of most Member States to seek common ground instead of obstructing the Commission's work.

The second issue is the calendar of the Commission's sessions in the disarmament timetable. The Commission is a subsidiary body of the General Assembly, whose goal is to serve as a universal framework for validating the actions of the international community. From that standpoint, it should be able to work in such a way as to incorporate the conclusions of all other entities responsible for disarmament issues at various levels.

At present, the complete opposite is happening. The Commission meets at the beginning of the disarmament timetable and is conditioned to not affect the work of other entities responsible for disarmament issues. The Chairs of the Commission and its working groups are pressured from all sides and urged not to push too far to avoid "complicating" the work of subsequent meetings, for instance on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons or on the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, or of any other working group.

In addition, some delegations assert that not having the outcome documents of those other meetings is the main reason why it is impossible to associate themselves with a few of the concrete results achieved in the framework of the Commission's work. In such conditions, many delegations confide to the Chair their disappointment at the trying nature of the Commission's deliberations, which are making no headway. Those delegations have lost interest in the Commission's work because of its narrow scope. Ultimately, the United Nations Disarmament Commission seems to be subordinate to those other forums, whereas it should be in a position where it can

assess their results and performance so as to make appropriate recommendations to the General Assembly.

The universality of the United Nations and the presence within it of unacknowledged nuclear Powers enable the Organization to play a key role in addressing disarmament issues and to involve all Member States in the review of related questions and in the established normative framework. Therein lies what I believe to be a rationale for scheduling the session of the Disarmament Commission in July rather than April.

Having said all of that, I wish to stress one very important thing. The difficulties I have mentioned are not reason enough to throw out the baby with the bath water. The fact that the Commission has been unable to adopt any text over the past few years does not mean that it is a useless body. The Commission is a special framework for maintaining interactive dialogue among all Member States on issues of vital importance to international peace and security. It fulfils a unique and irreplaceable function in the United Nations system in general and the disarmament machinery in particular. Moreover, it can take indirect credit for progress made in the field of disarmament over the past few years. In that respect, some delegations even prefer to view the Commission as a framework for dialogue, which is the core of its mandate as a deliberative body, rather than as a body responsible for formulating recommendations, which forces it to participate in arduous negotiations on texts to be adopted.

In conclusion, the Disarmament Commission is a vital body that should be better recognized and more effectively used than is the case. The next session should be tackled with a view to doing our utmost to complete the current cycle on a positive note. The points raised on the difficulties besetting the Commission are also worth thinking about in preparation for a more in-depth debate as part of the review of measures to revitalize the disarmament mechanism.

**The Chair:** I thank Ambassador Zinsou for his statement and for his kind words addressed to me.

I now give the floor to Ms. Theresa Hitchens, Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research.

**Ms. Hitchens** (United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research): I, too, would like to

congratulate you, Sir, on your election, as this is the first time I address this body.

The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) has been part of the United Nations disarmament machinery for 30 years. As members know, the commemoration of the Institute's 30-year anniversary is the subject of a draft resolution (A/C.1/65/L.47/Rev.1) before this Committee, so I will not dwell on that milestone any further, except to heartily thank the sponsors of the draft resolution, particularly the Government of France, and UNIDIR's donors for their support over these past three decades.

I will come back to the question of support for the Institute shortly, but first of all I would like to offer some insights that have less to do with UNIDIR's own place in our collective disarmament machinery and more to do with the bigger picture, that is, the disarmament machinery writ large.

As we all know, the Secretary-General's High-level Meeting of 24 September certainly brought the disarmament machinery into the limelight. It has become a theme of this General Assembly. Whether or not the stagnation of parts of the multilateral disarmament machinery is viewed as a matter of universal concern, it is undeniable that this issue is receiving more attention than usual.

To state the obvious, this is particularly so in the case of the Conference on Disarmament. UNIDIR, as a body based in Geneva, follows the work of the Conference very closely. One of the actions suggested by the Secretary-General in the Chair's summary of the High-level Meeting (see A/65/496, annex) is for his Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters to undertake a thorough review of the issues raised on 24 September. I have recently brought to the attention of Board members and the United Nations missions in Geneva that UNIDIR stands ready to assist the Advisory Board, which also serves as UNIDIR's Board of Trustees, in any way it can.

Ideas for revitalizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament and taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations have been, in various ways, a feature of UNIDIR's research in recent years. The topic of fixing the broken disarmament machinery has been a regular focus of presentations by the Director of UNIDIR to the First Committee in the past.

In regard to the Conference on Disarmament, a short paper published by UNIDIR in 2009 on getting the Conference back to work was tabled there as a working paper. It can be found online on UNIDIR's website. In addition, several posts on our blog "Disarmament Insight", which is read by the Geneva disarmament community and beyond, have raised for debate a number of topical aspects of the Conference's rules of procedure, including the issue of the purpose of the annual work programme.

More broadly, over the past six years, UNIDIR has increasingly focused on improving the prospects for successful multilateral disarmament negotiations in all and any concerned forums. Recent UNIDIR publications tracing the history of the negotiations of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the Convention on Cluster Munitions have reflected on what can be learned from these successful, yet very different initiatives for future negotiations.

The case of the 1996 CTBT is especially pertinent as it represents the last negotiated outcome of the Conference on Disarmament. Following publication of this history in 2009, UNIDIR held a series of events with Conference diplomats to see what lessons might be learned from this difficult, yet, again, ultimately successful negotiation that could be applied to current Conference issues such as negotiation of a fissile material treaty.

Additional interdisciplinary work on improving the function of the disarmament machinery includes the Disarmament as Humanitarian Action Project, which ran from 2004 to 2008 and produced four volumes of work examining what underlying political conditions are most conducive to successful negotiations. It is satisfying that this groundbreaking work is being increasingly referred to not only in academic circles and civil society publications but also by States Members of the United Nations. I believe that the notion of focusing on nuclear disarmament "through the lens not of traditional arms control, but rather international humanitarian law", to use the words of the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, offers a valid new direction in this complex area.

The argument is that, given the horrendous consequences of the use of nuclear weapons, nuclear disarmament is at heart a humanitarian imperative. The individual therefore becomes the central object of

protection from the impacts of the use of such weapons, with humanitarian goals prevailing over traditional national security interests derived from their perceived military utility.

I could offer a number of other examples of activities and work done by UNIDIR in support of the Conference on Disarmament, notably in the areas of weapons in outer space, negative security assurances and fissile materials, but representatives can find all of this information on UNIDIR's website or can come and ask me if they are interested.

I should note that the Institute's activities range from organizing seminars, talking to diplomatic missions and research to publishing the journal *Disarmament Forum*. This publication is produced in English and French and is one of the few journals on disarmament that is bilingual. Often, *Disarmament Forum* focuses on new aspects of current international security problems and new and emerging issues in international security. The most recent edition, for example, focused on maritime security, which is an emerging issue for all of us.

It may surprise many here today that we also serve as a kind of safe space for conducting discussions on elemental issues facing both the Conference on Disarmament and the wider international security arena. As we are an autonomous research institution of the United Nations, we can serve as a platform when other parts of the disarmament machinery are stagnating and stalemated, and we have done so for the past 15 years.

I would like to note that none of these activities or publications is supported by the United Nations regular budget. UNIDIR is virtually entirely dependent on individual Member States as donors. Concerns are actually growing about this state of affairs. The Board of Trustees has resolved to pursue this issue urgently, and that effort is also being supported by the draft resolution that will come before this Committee. It is our hope that we can find a way to overcome this chronic problem in order to secure UNIDIR's independence, which is a vital ingredient of our ability to provide research to all Members of the United Nations.

Finally, let me thank wholeheartedly all the delegations that have voiced expressions of support to me in the margins of this Committee and elsewhere. It has been very gratifying for me as a relatively new

Director of UNIDIR to know that the institution has that much support. Delegations may rest assured that UNIDIR will continue to stand ready to support all Member States in our mutual efforts to forward the cause of disarmament, peace and security.

**The Chair:** I thank Ms. Hitchens for her statement and her kind words addressed to me.

It is my intention at this point to provide the Committee with the opportunity to have interactive discussions with our panellists through an informal question-and-answer session. I will therefore proceed to suspension of the meeting in order to enable us to continue our discussion in an informal mode.

*The meeting was suspended at 10.35 a.m. and resumed at 10.40 a.m.*

**The Chair:** I now call on those delegations wishing to make national statements under this agenda item.

**Mr. Lint** (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): It is my honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). Candidate States Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; 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 Georgia associate themselves with this statement.

The European Union firmly believes that a multilateral approach to security, disarmament and non-proliferation is the best way to maintain international order. The European Union, a staunch advocate of effective multilateralism, believes that the General Assembly and its First Committee, the Conference on Disarmament, the United Nations Disarmament Commission and the various international treaties, as well as their bodies and review processes, must be mutually reinforcing. Given the new threats to security, the disarmament and non-proliferation architecture must, more than ever, be preserved and, if necessary, strengthened so that all its elements can function effectively.

Because of its universal nature, the First Committee is one of the most important forums for discussing and adopting resolutions on non-proliferation and disarmament issues. We should like it to promote a common understanding of current challenges to peace and security, and to help the international community confront them through

consideration and formulation of the most appropriate instruments. To that end, the European Union calls on all delegations to ensure that the First Committee focuses on the real topics of the day that occupy a central place in the area of non-proliferation and disarmament. Far from being a pro forma forum that simply updates previously adopted resolutions, the Committee should be an open, relevant platform for discussion, able to confront today's challenges to our collective security and to produce concrete measures to deal with them.

The European Union fully supports the work of the Office of Disarmament Affairs in implementing the relevant decisions and resolutions of the General Assembly. It stresses the importance of the Conference on Disarmament as a unique, standing multilateral forum available to the international community for disarmament negotiations. The European Union welcomed the adoption on 29 May 2009 of a programme of work and greatly regrets that it has not yet been implemented. The European Union commends the recent High-level Meeting on Revitalizing the Work of the Conference on Disarmament and Taking Forward Multilateral Disarmament Negotiations, and welcomes the Secretary-General's call to action. We hope and desire that the Conference can resume its work as soon as possible. We would like to see a substantive follow-up to the High-level Meeting in order to maximize the effectiveness of the entire disarmament architecture.

The European Union takes this opportunity to reiterate its commitment to the Conference on Disarmament and to expanding it, particularly to those States members of the EU that are not yet members of the Conference. In this regard, the EU welcomes the creation of an informal observer group for the Conference during the 2010 session.

The United Nations Disarmament Commission is also a piece of the disarmament machinery. We regret that it was not able to make any progress in its deliberations during the 2010 session. The European Union is convinced that identifying a limited number of specific subjects that the Commission could focus on in its deliberations, as well as adopting more expeditious working methods, would allow it to hold relevant discussions, at least in those areas where a consensus can be found. We hope that the Disarmament Commission will be able to re-establish its role in promoting the goal set forth in its mandate.

*Mr. Schaper (Netherlands), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

The existing disarmament architecture has created significant obligations and commitments in the disarmament field. Nonetheless, problems remain with respect to its functioning. The current direction of international relations demands that we remedy this. For an architecture such as this to function adequately, political will, good faith and full respect on the part of States for their obligations and commitments are essential. The European Union will continue to work constructively to achieve these goals.

**Mr. Macedo Soares (Brazil)** (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the members of the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) and its associated members: Argentina, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and my own country, Brazil.

The efforts of the international community to promote international peace and security make essential the existence of a strengthened multilateral mechanism to address disarmament and non-proliferation issues within the United Nations. In this regard, MERCOSUR and associated States renew their commitment to the efficacy of the mechanism established at the first special session of the General Assembly dedicated to disarmament in 1978. That session introduced a range of bodies with different but complementary functions, with the goal of strengthening the role of the Organization in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation.

The progress made so far is undeniable. The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty are important milestones of international law. MERCOSUR and associated States believe that the current difficulties arise not from the existing multilateral mechanism, which can always be improved, but from a lack of the necessary political will on the part of States, especially the nuclear-weapon States, to move forward with substantive agreements in the disarmament field.

Once again, the Conference on Disarmament, the sole multilateral body for negotiations on disarmament, could not agree on a programme of work that would enable it to make progress in substantive work on the

items on its agenda. In this regard, MERCOSUR and associated States welcome the Secretary-General's recent initiative to convene, in New York on 24 September, the High-level Meeting on Revitalizing the Work of the Conference on Disarmament and Taking Forward Multilateral Disarmament Negotiations. We hope that the Conference can resume negotiations in 2011 with renewed energy in order to adopt and implement a programme of work.

Besides emphasizing their readiness to immediately begin negotiations on a treaty on fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, which would promote the aims of both non-proliferation and disarmament, the members of MERCOSUR and associated States are also interested in substantively addressing other key issues on the agenda of the Conference, such as nuclear disarmament, the prevention of an arms race in space, and security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States concerning the use or threat of use of such weapons.

As the Disarmament Commission concludes its triennial cycle, which began in 2009, MERCOSUR and associated States voice their expectation that the entity can play its role as the sole universal deliberative body entrusted with addressing in depth issues related to disarmament and non-proliferation. In 2011, the Commission will be challenged with submitting recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, the elements of a draft declaration of the 2010s as the fourth disarmament decade, and practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons.

The report presented by the United Nations Disarmament Commission for the 2010 session is strictly procedural. During that session, some delegations noted the appropriateness of not considering substantive elements that could anticipate the discussions to be held at the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons the following month. After the Review Conference, and taking into account the consensus achieved, MERCOSUR and associated States hope that the third and last session of the triennial cycle of the Disarmament Commission in 2011 can demonstrate the same spirit of commitment and understanding and achieve concrete results.



**Mr. Toro** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Brazil 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 from the nuclear threat and proliferation. This principle, along with that of good faith, must govern 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 fully relevant, as do all bodies dedicated to developing those issues and to strengthening the role of the United Nations as the privileged forum for negotiating such matters and for strengthening international peace and security. Among those bodies, we highlight the work of the Disarmament Commission as the only specialized deliberative body of universal composition. We are fully committed to the Commission's success in reaching an agreement on the three topics on its agenda: recommendations for achieving the goal of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, the elements of a draft declaration of the 2010s as the fourth disarmament decade, and practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons.

Unlike the beginning of the last session, this time our deliberations take place against the backdrop of new events that point to reinvigorating the disarmament agenda. However, much remains to be done if the sole United Nations body with a mandate to negotiate disarmament and non-proliferation issues is to be able to fulfil its role.

In that regard, my country hopes that the Conference on Disarmament can break the deadlock that it has experienced for more than 15 years with regard to the positions held on the substantive issues on its agenda. We are convinced that the Commission must address as soon as possible priority issues, such as the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty, the prevention of an arms race in outer space, negative security assurances and nuclear disarmament. It is vital that the Conference on Disarmament, with the agreement of its member States, preserve its mandate as the sole forum for multilateral negotiations, par excellence, on measures and agreements in that area.

At the recent High-level Meeting convened by the Secretary-General on 24 September, Member States expressed their various views on the current situation of the Conference on Disarmament. Venezuela wishes to underscore the full relevance of the statement made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. That statement sent a clear message on how we should approach this matter.

Once again, we wish to stress our support for the many regional and subregional initiatives in the field of disarmament, as they have been developed in the natural geographical area where the member countries of those areas participate through their regional institutions in drawing up strategies to strengthen peace and security. In that regard, we express our support for the work of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, with its headquarters in Lima, and for the draft resolution prepared by the delegation of Peru (A/C.1/65/L.21).

**Mrs. Ledesma Hernández** (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to reiterate the importance that Cuba attaches to the need to make concrete progress in the negotiations and deliberations on disarmament and arms control.

Cuba reaffirms the importance of the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral body for negotiations on disarmament. It is regrettable that that body still cannot carry out substantive work. However, the solution does not lie in starting to dispense with the Conference or in minimizing its importance. To the contrary, today more than ever it is the responsibility of all to preserve and strengthen it. We reiterate our call for flexibility, on the basis of respect for the rules of procedure so that the Conference can adopt as soon as possible a broad and balanced programme of work that takes into account the true priorities in the area of disarmament.

Nuclear disarmament is and must continue to be the highest priority. On that basis, we must build consensus in the context of the Conference on Disarmament. We reiterate our support for the call made by the Non-Aligned Movement for negotiations to start as soon as possible on a phased programme of work for the total elimination of nuclear weapons, including a nuclear weapons convention, within a set time frame.

Allow me also to stress the importance and relevance of the Disarmament Commission as the only specialized deliberative body within the multilateral disarmament mechanism of the United Nations. Cuba fully supports the work of the Commission, and hopes that all States shall demonstrate the necessary political will and flexibility to reach agreements on concrete recommendations.

I would also like to reiterate our concern over the growing trend of establishing expert groups of limited composition to analyse issues in the area of disarmament and arms control that are highly sensitive and of interest to all Member States. We believe that the establishment of expert groups must be the exception and not the rule; in their place, transparent and inclusive processes in which all Member States take part on an equal footing should be encouraged.

As the Non-Aligned Movement has been reiterating, we stress the need to convene a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. We express our concern about the fact that that essential event has still not taken place. It is important that the General Assembly set up a preparatory committee for its fourth special session devoted to disarmament without further delay.

Allow me to conclude by emphasizing that, in Cuba's view, the chief difficulties that the disarmament machinery faces are not primarily related to greater or lesser efficiency in its working methods but are rather due to reasons of another order, particularly the lack of political will that some States have displayed in making progress on relevant issues that are crucial to international peace and security, such as the question of nuclear disarmament. We are optimistic and continue to hope that we will begin to see a more positive prospect that corresponds to the international community's expectations.

**Mr. Sorreta** (Philippines): The Philippines is pleased to address the First Committee on the important topic of disarmament machinery. In this regard, we welcome the draft resolution entitled "Follow-up to the high-level meeting held on 24 September 2010: revitalizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament and taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations" (A/C.1/65/L.34), to be introduced by Austria. It is important that this item be included on the agenda of the General Assembly's sixty-sixth session.

On the Conference on Disarmament, I wish to make the following points. First and foremost, the Conference must be expanded. The fact that there is still a divide between regular and observer membership of the Conference is symptomatic of the weakness in its status quo. At the very least, the Conference should facilitate reopening the expansion process to new full members, particularly for those States that have indicated an interest. In this regard, the Philippines calls on the Conference to appoint a special coordinator or rapporteur for the expansion issue.

The Philippines urges the Conference membership to agree at least on realizing a programme of work. We understand that the States that have blocked the programme are concerned about the emphasis on the issue of the fissile material cut-off treaty; a constructive way forward would therefore be to come up with a balanced programme of work without, perhaps, elaborating on the specifics.

On the United Nations Disarmament Commission, I wish to make the following points. For the Philippines, the Disarmament Commission remains a vital mechanism in the field of disarmament. We reaffirm its importance and continuing relevance, given its universal membership and its ability to submit substantial recommendations on urgent disarmament issues to the General Assembly. The Philippines looks forward to substantive discussions and agreements on the three agenda items for the Conference's 2011 substantive session: recommendations for achieving the goal of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons; the elements of a draft declaration of the 2010s as the fourth disarmament decade; and practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons. The Philippines urges Member States to fully utilize the Disarmament Commission and calls for enhanced cooperation between it, the First Committee and the Conference on Disarmament.

On other aspects of the disarmament machinery, I wish to make the following points. The role of the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters should be examined. The Philippines recommends that the Board also consider having a dialogue with Member States. The Philippines believes in the importance of enhancing disarmament education and the related need to increase support for the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research.

We appreciate current efforts such as the disarmament fellowship programme, and view it as a confidence-building measure among disarmament and security stakeholders in government. There should thus be more emphasis on disarmament education programmes for actual disarmament practitioners, such as diplomats, military officers and the like, especially in the developing world. Most existing programmes target academicians and civil society. It may be more efficient and effective to educate Government practitioners and to encourage networking and fellowship among such practitioners.

**Mr. Strohal** (Austria): It is a privilege to introduce today draft resolution A/C.1/65/L.34, entitled "Follow-up to the high-level meeting held on 24 September 2010: revitalizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament and taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations". This text, which has just been circulated, is sponsored so far by a total of 35 States: Australia, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, the Philippines, Poland, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Uruguay, as well as my own delegation.

The year 2010 has already seen a number of positive developments in the disarmament field that are evidence of increased political will. In order to take full advantage of the current conducive political climate, we must ensure that the disarmament machinery, including the Conference on Disarmament, is fit for the purpose. This new draft resolution seeks to recognize the efforts of Member States, supported by the Secretary-General, to revitalize the disarmament machinery and secure progress in multilateral disarmament, bearing in mind the functions and powers of the General Assembly with respect to disarmament.

It is a short draft resolution, with just four operative paragraphs. Paragraphs 1 and 2 relate to the High-level Meeting convened by the Secretary-General on 24 September, welcoming the opportunity granted Member States to address relevant issues, expressing appreciation for the high-level attendance, and emphasizing the strong message that emerged from the group of 52 Ministers of Foreign Affairs and other high-level officials regarding the need to revitalize the

work of the disarmament machinery bodies and to advance negotiations. Paragraph 3 notes with appreciation the suggestion made with regard to revitalizing the multilateral disarmament machinery. Finally, paragraph 4 proposes to inscribe an identical item on the agenda of the sixty-sixth session. It is our hope that the time between the sixty-fifth and the sixty-sixth sessions will be used wisely and that we will be in a position to welcome concrete progress before this time next year.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that the draft resolution has been sponsored by a cross-regional group of States, and that the sponsors would warmly welcome co-sponsorship by other States prior to action. They may sign the sponsorship sheet, which is now held by the Secretariat. The authors of the draft resolution have sought to accommodate in a balanced way the views of States keen to see advances in multilateral disarmament negotiations, including in the Conference on Disarmament. On behalf of the sponsors, I recommend the draft resolution for the First Committee's consideration and support.

**Mr. Abdelaziz** (Egypt): It is very good to see you, Sir, chairing this meeting in which we are discussing the disarmament machinery. With your excellent background on this issue and your experience in many other international security organizations, I am confident that we will achieve success here.

In the context of our thematic debate on disarmament machinery, let me begin by reiterating Egypt's full support for the existing United Nations disarmament machinery, which has proved to be a worthy set of international tools in the field of disarmament, as was foreseen at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, known as SSOD-I.

Through the Conference on Disarmament, the international community has obtained a number of key legal instruments that have framed our legal commitments and national and international practices in their domains. Through the Disarmament Commission, some key guidelines and norm-setting consensus frameworks have evolved, including the 1999 guidelines on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, adopted by consensus under my personal chairmanship of the Commission that year.

Egypt supports the United Nations Disarmament Commission as the sole specialized, deliberative body

within the Organization's multilateral disarmament machinery, and believes in the important work of the Commission and the important results it can produce. We note its work in its ongoing three-year cycle on the three topics: "Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear 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". Egypt actively contributes to work conducted on all three main themes.

As efforts intensify today to revitalize the disarmament machinery in general, and the Conference on Disarmament in particular, I wish to refer to our rich interaction at the High-level Meeting on Revitalizing the Conference on Disarmament and Taking Forward Multilateral Disarmament Negotiations, held on 24 September, and recall the range of views and proposals, including those of the Secretary-General, put forward at that important deliberative opportunity. In this context, we thank the Secretary-General for his five-point proposal presented on 24 September 2009, and for his proposals presented at the High-level Meeting, which we consider to be complementary to the range of proposals put forward by Member States, rather than being an alternative to such proposals.

Indeed, we have supported the Secretary-General's proposal to add a new agenda item entitled "High-level Meeting on Revitalizing the Conference on Disarmament and Taking Forward Multilateral Disarmament Negotiations". But we do not support such an item being used as a platform to criticize the Conference on Disarmament or to take disarmament negotiations out of the context of the Conference. We place greater value in an effort being made to understand the underlying causes for which a consensus has been difficult to obtain in the Conference and to address obstacles to such consensus. We believe that such an effort would be best exerted in the Conference on Disarmament itself, supported as necessary by the General Assembly.

In this context, Egypt still believes that the Conference on Disarmament is the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, and in that context welcomes the collective action of Member States aimed at revitalizing the work of the Conference as long as such efforts target neither its rules of procedure nor its priorities. That was our position at the adoption

of the programme of work for the Conference in 2009, as reflected in document CD/1864, and our approach to the High-level Meeting in September. It has not and will not change.

While fully agreeing that the revitalization of the Conference represents an important dimension on the efforts undertaken to revitalize the disarmament machinery, we do not support focusing only on the Conference as a priority, on account of needed equal efforts to revitalize the United Nations Disarmament Commission and further streamline the work of the First Committee. We believe that efforts to revitalize the Conference on Disarmament should be driven not only by the desire to begin negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty, but also with a view to the overall potential of that crucial body in terms of negotiations on a legally binding instrument on unconditional security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States and, more importantly, on a nuclear-weapons convention and other identified priorities among its four core issues.

Recalling that today's disarmament machinery is primarily a creation of the SSOD-I, it is difficult to see how revitalizing such important forums can take place without successfully convening a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-IV), which would be the most competent forum to evaluate the mandates and procedural frameworks of the machinery, including in particular the Conference on Disarmament and the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

Along with all States members of the Non-Aligned Movement, Egypt is co-sponsoring a draft resolution presented by Indonesia on behalf of the Movement (A/C.1/65/L.35), which calls for the establishment of an open-ended working group to establish the Preparatory Committee for SSOD-IV starting next year. Despite the failure of the second and third special sessions to achieve their objectives, they both showed us where some of the shortcomings are. SSOD-IV will take note of that and will certainly build on the momentum created by the success of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, along with other positive developments in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation.

Guided by a genuine determination to play an active role in collective efforts to revitalize the

disarmament machinery, Egypt will play its role in demonstrating the flexibility and assertiveness required to move the multilateral disarmament agenda forward. We call on all other States to do so as well, and look forward to our collective success in this important endeavour.

**Mr. Van Den IJssel** (Netherlands): I hope you will also allow my delegation to express particular pleasure at seeing you, Sir, in the chair of this meeting. At the outset, let me say that my delegation, of course, fully aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Belgium on behalf of the European Union earlier today.

Like many other States, the Netherlands is concerned about the stagnation in the disarmament machinery, in particular the Conference on Disarmament. Despite positive developments in some areas of disarmament and arms control, and in spite of what we still consider to be a positive momentum in this field, the Conference on Disarmament continues to remain at a stalemate. As stated both in this room and at the High-level Meeting held on 24 September 2010, the Netherlands considers this deadlock unacceptable. We are wasting scarce financial and human resources at a time when most Government budgets face harsh cuts of a nature unheard of a few years ago. But even more seriously, we may be wasting the positive momentum. Now is the time to act.

It is for that reason that the Netherlands commends Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for having taken the initiative to convene the High-level Meeting in order to help the Member States to overcome the current deadlock. We have always regarded the High-level Meeting to be a starting point; follow-up is essential, both inside and outside the Conference on Disarmament. Our main focus should be how to restart substantive work and negotiations on disarmament issues, not on preserving institutions at all costs.

We must make the disarmament machinery fit for its purpose. That means streamlining and strengthening the machinery, not adjusting the purpose. In that respect, we are very proud to be among those nations that have taken the initiative to submit to this Committee a draft resolution on the follow-up to the High-level Meeting (A/C.1/65/L.34), as just introduced by my colleague Ambassador Strohal of Austria. We hope that the draft resolution will indeed help us to undertake the essential follow-up to the High-level

Meeting in the coming year. We hope that all States will be able to support the draft resolution.

**Ms. Skorpen** (Norway): Norway is firmly committed to multilateralism in disarmament and non-proliferation because we believe in inclusive and transparent processes. Our current machinery, in which the Conference on Disarmament is proclaimed to be the sole multilateral negotiating body, is neither. Any credible and relevant multilateral negotiating body should be open to all countries. Only 65 countries are members of the Conference. Several countries have been knocking on its door for years, but it does not seem as if the question of enlargement will be revisited any time soon.

The record of the Conference on Disarmament is poor on the issue of transparency. There is virtually no interaction with civil society. This may have been acceptable when the disarmament machinery was set up 30 years ago, but today it is not. The Conference has proven utterly incapable of adapting to a new reality. All stakeholders should be included in the disarmament processes, including relevant non-governmental organizations.

The working methods of the Conference on Disarmament are in dire need of reform. It is not acceptable that the consensus principle is applied in a manner that allows countries to single-handedly bring work to a standstill — which in turn has led to the marginalization and irrelevance the Conference is now facing. The practice of first seeking consensus within regional groups, set up along the lines of the Cold War, contributes further to maintaining the status quo and to ensuring that any outcome would be a least common denominator.

Some claim that the machinery is not the problem and that the real problem is lack of political will. Judging from the statements made at this session of the First Committee, the very clear message from the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in May, and from the High-level Meeting on Revitalizing the Work of the Conference on Disarmament and Taking Forward Multilateral Disarmament Negotiations on 24 September, there is plenty of political will to move forward.

The frustration over the multilateral disarmament machinery runs deep. It is particularly frustrating that, at a time when the momentum on disarmament appears

stronger than it rarely has, the machinery itself has become an obstacle to capitalizing on this momentum. This situation is unacceptable, and therefore Norway is co-sponsoring draft resolution A/C.1/65/L.34, just now introduced by Austria, which calls for placing the item on the follow-up to the High-level Meeting on the agenda of next year's session. If there has been no progress by then, it is time to switch off life support.

We should also use this opportunity to look at other parts of the disarmament machinery. The United Nations Disarmament Commission, established for the purpose of conducting substantive deliberations and making recommendations, has not been able to deliver anything for over a decade. We thus question the need to preserve the Disarmament Commission at all; if we do, it has to be made more practical, more focused and more relevant. We continue to believe that regular sessions of the Commission should be much shorter and focus on one or two topics chosen by the First Committee.

Given its universal nature, we should also look at ways to improve the working methods of the First Committee. This body should play a crucial role in advancing the work on disarmament and non-proliferation. This is all the more important as other parts of the machinery have come to a grinding halt. Norway has for years questioned whether the great efforts mobilized to secure the highest number of sponsors to resolutions are the best way to make use of our time and energy. If we could agree on limiting the practice of seeking co-sponsorship to only newly introduced draft resolutions, we would improve the efficiency of the First Committee.

It is also Norway's view that when a resolution has been adopted, it should stand unless otherwise decided. This would enable us to get the number of repetitive resolutions down and make more time available for substantive and focused discussions. Too many draft resolutions have nearly identical texts to previous years' resolutions and do not reflect new opportunities to move the disarmament agenda forward.

This year's session of the First Committee takes place in the wake of an NPT Review Conference, which sent a strong political message about the overall objective of creating a world without nuclear weapons. We need to act on this momentum, and if the existing

machinery is unable to facilitate action, States will find other ways.

When the working methods of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons stood in the way of real progress on landmines and cluster munitions, conventions that banned those weapons were negotiated outside the existing structures. The framework for deliberations and negotiations must be a function of the objectives we want to achieve. The multilateral machinery must never become an end in itself. If it does not work, we must either fix it or take our business somewhere else.

**Mr. Manfredi (Italy):** Allow me first of all to congratulate Mr. Koterec on the manner in which he has been conducting the work of our Committee and to pledge the support of the Italian delegation towards achieving full success.

Italy fully aligns itself with the statement made by the Ambassador of Belgium on behalf of the European Union.

Italy warmly welcomes the introduction of draft resolution A/C.1/65/L.34 on the follow-up of the High-level Meeting on Revitalizing the Work of the Conference on Disarmament and Taking Forward Multilateral Disarmament Negotiations. We were happy to co-sponsor it. As a matter of fact, we have been actively engaged in its drafting since last month, when an informal group of like-minded countries first met in Geneva to work to ensure that Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's admirable initiative to convene the Meeting and the political momentum it engendered not be wasted.

My country applauded that initiative of the Secretary-General since its inception. To support his effort and to answer the request he sent to all United Nations Member States, we circulated a few days before the Meeting a working paper illustrating Italy's views and suggestions on how to revitalize the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

We have heard countless times in recent days here in New York, and even more frequently in Geneva, from all delegations, both of countries belonging to the Conference on Disarmament and those that do not, that the fact that the Conference has not produced any concrete results in the past 14 years borders on the unbelievable. As we all know, the Conference was set up in 1978 as a multilateral

negotiating body in the field of disarmament, but since 1996 it has negotiated nothing, in spite of having adopted by consensus in 2009 a programme of work providing for negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. Its work has not amounted to much more than that of a distinguished debating society.

The Secretary-General quite rightly decided that the situation could no longer be tolerated. Disarmament — and especially nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation — is no longer a topic of abstract discussion. The international strategic situation is vastly different from that of 1990. International statesmen are increasingly coming to the conclusion that the future lies in a world free of nuclear weapons. The two main nuclear Powers are actively engaged in the mutual reduction of their arsenals. Only five months ago, the signatories of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons agreed on an ambitious plan of action for nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful use of nuclear energy.

However, in all this dynamism, the Conference on Disarmament has remained inert. That is why it is essential that the appeal of the Secretary-General contained in his summary of the discussions at the High-level Meeting (A/65/496, annex), as well as the calls by the 52 ministers present at the event, not remain unheeded, and that suggestions contained therein be brought to fruition in a reasonably brief time frame.

Italy urges every country present at this session of the First Committee to consider the reason behind the High-level Meeting: to recognize that a world free of nuclear weapons, though obviously not achievable overnight or even in the short term, will be in the long run the most sensible choice for nuclear security.

**Mr. Barriga** (Liechtenstein): For Liechtenstein, a small State with no armed forces, the maintenance of effective disarmament machinery is not only a matter of national security but also an issue that has a strong and direct impact on the overarching purpose of the United Nations. National security is, of course, affected by a multitude of factors, among which is the ability of the international system to make real advances in the area of disarmament. We therefore favour an immediate start to negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a fissile material cut-off treaty and support the long-term goal of a nuclear weapons convention.

We remain concerned, however, that the most recent substantive negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament have become a subject contemplated by historians rather than diplomats. This state of affairs calls into question the entire mandate of the Conference.

At times it is necessary for the United Nations membership to entrust certain responsibilities to a body composed of a limited number of States, as was done with the Conference on Disarmament. However, this also creates an enduring burden of justification vis-à-vis the supervising body — in this case, the General Assembly. For the past 14 years, the Conference on Disarmament has not met that burden of justification.

While we applaud the major disarmament successes of recent years — the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions, to name but two — we note that these took place outside the framework of the United Nations and its single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, the Conference on Disarmament. To our mind, this challenges the very reason for the Conference on Disarmament to exist.

The situation in 2009, when the Conference was able to agree on a programme of work — considered a breakthrough at the time — but unable to implement it, made it plain that the time has come to have a debate about the future of the Conference on Disarmament and, indeed, the United Nations disarmament machinery as a whole.

The only place to have such a debate, which affects the national security of all Member States, is in the General Assembly. We are therefore pleased to be a co-sponsor of draft resolution A/C.1/65/L.34/Rev.1, entitled “Follow-up to the high-level meeting held on 24 September 2010 — revitalizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament and taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations”, introduced by Austria.

We contributed a written statement to the Secretary-General’s High-level Meeting on revitalizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament, which we saw as the first step in a process leading to the revitalization and reform of the Conference. While we were ready to have a substantive discussion on this topic at this session of the First Committee, we welcome, as a compromise, the draft resolution’s intention to inscribe the topic of follow-up to the High-

level Meeting on the agenda of the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session. We sincerely hope that the draft resolution will receive the broadest possible support.

**Mr. Gumbi** (South Africa): South Africa welcomes the opportunity presented by the High-level Meeting convened on 24 September at the initiative of the Secretary-General to reflect on the challenges facing the multilateral disarmament machinery, particularly the Conference on Disarmament. We also welcome the Secretary-General's continued support for the efforts of Member States to advance the multilateral disarmament agenda and take multilateral disarmament negotiations forward. My delegation believes that the statements made by ministers and other high-ranking officials illustrated the resolve of the overwhelming majority of States to make concrete progress towards the achievement of a world free from the threat posed by nuclear weapons through the early commencement of disarmament negotiations.

The adoption of a programme of work during the 2009 session of the Conference on Disarmament signalled to the international community that there is hope for progress after many years of stalemate in that body and for an end to the era that saw parties resort to unilateral and other limited initiatives which did not always serve our collective security interests optimally. We recall the positive atmosphere and spirit of compromise that allowed the adoption of that programme of work, which, I note, covered all the core issues on the Conference's agenda. It is indeed regrettable that the Conference could not implement that decision and that no further progress could subsequently be achieved. The current situation in the Conference is particularly disappointing given the positive pronouncements made in recent years.

South Africa remains deeply committed to the total elimination of all nuclear weapons, based on our conviction that nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are inextricably linked and that urgent, transparent, irreversible and verifiable measures are required on both fronts. While we are satisfied with the progress that has already been achieved in strengthening measures aimed at preventing the further proliferation of nuclear weapons, we are concerned about the continuing lack of progress on nuclear disarmament, particularly in the context of the mandate of the Conference on Disarmament.

The Conference on Disarmament has the responsibility to conduct multilateral disarmament negotiations, as mandated in 1978 by the first special session on disarmament. Due to its inability to fulfil this basic mandate over the past 14 years, some have understandably started questioning whether the Conference remains the appropriate vehicle to pursue disarmament objectives. Others argue that it is the only institution that can deliver results. Some believe that the Conference is out of step with external reality, while others argue that it is a mere reflection of that reality. Some say that there is something wrong with its institutional arrangements, including its rules of procedure, while others believe that they provide the necessary guarantees required by States to protect their security interests.

Despite the wide-ranging views on these questions, the central issue that we as Member States have to address is whether the Conference on Disarmament is still able to fulfil its mandate as a multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, or whether it is merely a creation of a bygone era, focused on maintaining the status quo, which is out of step with today's reality and in need of reform.

The past achievements of the Conference on Disarmament speak for themselves. Core disarmament instruments were negotiated in that forum, and no one can therefore claim that its structure does not allow negotiations to take place. It cannot be argued that there is something wrong with the secretarial or financial support for the work of the Conference, nor can the case be made that its agenda does not allow negotiations to take place.

What is clear is that the Conference can no longer continue with business as usual. South Africa has consistently argued that our collective security concerns require sustainable, collective solutions that not only take into account the individual security needs of those that continue to hold the power in an unequal international system, but also reflect our shared security interests. While we acknowledge its imperfections and the need for reform, we remain fully committed to the strengthening of the multilateral disarmament machinery.

The High-level Meeting served as an important catalyst for a critical reflection on approaches taken in recent years that have prevented progress in the multilateral disarmament arena. South Africa does not



believe that a revision of the Conference on Disarmament's rules of procedure, including the consensus rule, is really needed. What is necessary is a critical reflection on the approach that has been taken towards the conduct of negotiations within the Conference. We will therefore join those delegations that wish to seize this opportunity to provide renewed impetus towards progress in the disarmament arena, which will contribute towards increased security for all.

Disarmament is the business not only of those with the military might or of those represented in the Conference on Disarmament; it is the business of all those who seek a better and more secure world, including Governments, members of civil society and ordinary citizens, which therefore places a special responsibility on those represented in the Conference.

Given the rules under which the Conference on Disarmament operates and the broad scope of issues covered in its agenda, we believe that there are adequate guarantees to safeguard the security interests of all members of the Conference, while allowing us to address our collective security concerns. What is at stake is not the continued relevance of the Conference on Disarmament as a multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, but, indeed, our collective security interests in an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world.

In conclusion, my delegation stands ready to work with the Committee and all Member States, members of the Conference on Disarmament and civil society with a view to supporting substantive progress on such long outstanding matters.

**Mr. Hoffmann** (Germany): The German delegation associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of the European Union on the disarmament machinery and of Austria on behalf of the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/65/L.34/Rev.1 on the High-level Meeting, of which Germany is one.

A new momentum has emerged in the field of disarmament and arms control. My delegation has noted with satisfaction that nearly all delegations underlined that point in the general debate. Many have called on the international community to seize this opportunity. Indeed, after a lost decade, the international community should now unite in making this a decade of disarmament. Let us, in particular, make every effort in moving ahead towards a world

free of nuclear weapons, which is a goal to which the international community has already committed itself in many instruments and other documents for well over half a century.

That brings me directly to the Conference on Disarmament. For nearly 15 years, the Conference has been unable to do what it is tasked to do, that is, to negotiate new instruments in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. It was therefore high time for that untenable situation to become the subject of a high-level meeting on the margins of the General Assembly.

Germany thanks the Secretary-General for having taken the initiative to convene that Meeting on 24 September, and welcomes the suggestions that he made in his Chair's summary (see A/65/496, annex). Vice-Chancellor and Foreign Minister Westerwelle was delighted to demonstrate through his participation in the High-level Meeting how strongly we feel about making progress in the fields of disarmament and non-proliferation.

We are very concerned about the state of affairs in the Conference on Disarmament. Let me recall that at long last, in May 2009, agreement was reached on a well-balanced and comprehensive programme of work. However, unfortunately, as others rightly pointed out during the general debate as well, at least one State continues to frustrate the will of the vast majority to implement that decision, as a result of which the Conference continues to be in deadlock.

We do not only have grave doubts about the wisdom of using — or should one perhaps say abusing — the consensus rule in order to block purely procedural decisions, such as the adoption of work programmes. In fact, if that kind of behaviour were to become the norm in the conduct of international relations, the international community would soon face total gridlock. What is even more important is the fact that we do not find persuasive the arguments that we are presented with for stopping the entire international community from making progress on the important core disarmament issues on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament.

With respect to the specific item of a fissile material cut-off treaty, I would recall what Minister Westerwelle said in the High-level Meeting: "States need not fear negotiations on a fissile material

treaty. ... Their interests will be protected within the course of the process”.

Let me also say that one should not overload the circuits. The Conference on Disarmament cannot be the place to solve difficult issues that are not or cannot be part of its remit. Therefore, the Conference on Disarmament must not be held hostage to their solution. As is often the case, solutions to difficult issues need to be found in broader regional frameworks.

Finally, we all know that, at the end of the day, it remains the prerogative of States to decide whether to become parties to treaties or not.

So, in the light of all that, States should consider very carefully whether it is right and legitimate to stop everybody else merely from getting started negotiating processes on the most important issues. We are convinced that the vast majority of the Conference on Disarmament member States continues to be ready to start work along the lines of the programme of work adopted in May 2009, and we very much hope that that can actually be done early in the coming year in Geneva.

Germany continues to be a strong supporter of the Conference on Disarmament. However, we are acutely aware of the ever-growing frustration among States the longer the present situation persists. No one should therefore be surprised when a need to consider other options is talked about not only informally, but also formally ever more often, as we have heard in this Committee, for instance. Some advocate setting deadlines; some ask whether it makes sense to continue to spend significant resources on a body that does not make progress; some have doubts about the rules of procedure, in particular the application of the consensus rule on procedural matters; and some think about negotiating certain issues in other forums.

In that situation, it appeared wise to us for the Secretary-General, in his Chair's summary of the High-level Meeting, to have suggested asking his Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters to undertake a thorough review of the issues at hand, including, *inter alia*, the possible establishment of a high-level panel of eminent persons with special focus on the functioning of the Conference on Disarmament. If things do not move forward in the Conference on Disarmament soon, we will certainly need to take a broader look at what

can be done to move the issues of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation forward.

Finally, that brings me to draft resolution A/C.1/65/L.34/Rev.1, of which we are a sponsor, as I said. Its operative heart is paragraph 4, in that it proposes to include on the agenda of the next session of the General Assembly an item that will give Member States an opportunity to discuss the state of affairs at the Conference on Disarmament and, beyond that, how multilateral disarmament negotiations can be taken forward in a broader sense. After years of stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament, it is right that the General Assembly should provide itself with that platform for further deliberation.

However, let me say in conclusion that it is certainly our hope that when we speak on this agenda item at next year's General Assembly session, all of us will be able to report with satisfaction that the Conference on Disarmament has really begun doing its proper work.

**Mr. Lauber** (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): It is a pleasure to see you, Sir, presiding over our meeting this morning.

Switzerland attaches great importance to strengthening the institutions and mechanisms devoted to disarmament and non-proliferation. They have served us well in the past and are essential to any future progress. What we here call the disarmament machinery was developed during the Cold War era and was consistent with the requirements of that time.

However, times have changed. National security and strategic balance remain and will remain important and legitimate concerns of States. At the same time, more than ever the world faces growing military budgets, illicit and uncontrolled trafficking in conventional weapons, and armed violence, which severely undermine peace, security, human rights, human security, the protection of the environment and economic and social development.

Today's disarmament machinery must be able to respond to that reality. Only by pursuing a holistic approach can we truly ensure the security of the people of this world. The existing disarmament machinery has not produced results for many years. On the contrary, it has helped maintain the status quo, particularly in regard to nuclear weapons. In order to obtain tangible

results and achieve our shared goals, we need functional and effective tools.

At the High-level Meeting of 24 September, a majority of States acknowledged the shortcomings of the existing machinery and the need for change in that area. In my country's view, a meaningful and effective follow-up to that event is important. We therefore welcome the inclusion of a new agenda item in the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly as a necessary first step. Furthermore, together with 34 original co-sponsors, we have submitted a draft resolution on the follow-up to the High-level Meeting held on 24 September (A/C.1/65/L.34/Rev.1). Austria introduced the draft resolution this morning and we encourage all delegations to support it.

In line with the draft resolution, we strongly suggest continuing and intensifying the thorough and inclusive exchange of views on today's challenges to the disarmament machinery and how to adapt it accordingly. Such a debate should integrate the views of all relevant actors, including civil society and independent experts. The result should give us a set of options for how to advance multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation and enable us to take concrete action by this time next year.

In response to the relevant discussions at the High-level Meeting on disarmament, the members of the Conference on Disarmament should reflect further on that body's working methods. The lack of political will on all sides appears to us to be the crux of the matter. On a pragmatic level, Switzerland supports steps aimed at reinterpreting the application of the consensus rule to procedural matters. In addition, we are ready to conceive of other ways to arrive at a consensus on a programme of work, for instance by departing from current practice and significantly reduce the level of detail in the programme. In this context, we welcome the analysis presented this morning by the Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research.

Finally, the Conference should seriously consider the opportunities that could result from expanded membership and a better effort to include the relevant expertise of civil society.

The First Committee could also benefit from revitalization. At present, we sit through long debates and process dozens of resolutions that reappear on a yearly basis almost unchanged. We chase co-sponsors

to get their signatures, and after receiving instructions we vote, sit back and consider our work done until the next year. Switzerland believes that our work here in New York should become more focused and more dynamic. Given its universal nature the First Committee has the authority to push forward concrete action and should do so.

Switzerland remains hopeful that in the months to come States will show additional political will to overcome obstacles and make disarmament mechanisms more effective. We are convinced that together we can improve the security of the peoples of the world.

**Mr. Tarar** (Pakistan): In the past year, the state of play in the United Nations disarmament machinery has received considerable attention, albeit evidently for the wrong reasons. By virtue of constant repetition, the hypothesis that the Conference on Disarmament is dysfunctional has crept into the United Nations disarmament discourse. Through clever semantics, media hype and bureaucratic activism, the international community is being led to believe that the Conference can justify its existence only by working according to a certain agenda, which consists in making negotiations on a fissile material treaty the centrepiece of the disarmament agenda.

Ironically, the paramount priority of nuclear disarmament, sanctified decades ago by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, is condemned to remain confined to the realm of discussions, along with legally binding negative security assurances and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. But the high priests of disarmament are quite content with the status quo. General Assembly resolutions calling for nuclear disarmament, as well as the strong calls emerging from various summits of the 118-member Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), have been disregarded or brushed aside, if not with contempt then certainly with benign neglect.

The deafening silence surrounding the real priorities is pierced by a cacophony about the imaginary malaise of the Conference on Disarmament. The Conference is being subjected to all kinds of attack — ranging from threats disguised as persuasion to outright threats of obsolescence or irrelevance — unless it agrees to negotiate a fissile material treaty. Ironically, even the panacea of such a treaty has been packaged with clever

caveats that would protect the interests of the major producers of fissile material, which, after amassing unknown stockpiles, are now making a virtue out of necessity by declaring moratoriums. However, in the case of South Asia, a lack of even-handedness in nuclear commerce has created a strategic conundrum for Pakistan. As it is touted at present, a discriminatory fissile material cut-off treaty would create a permanent strategic handicap for Pakistan.

Some of those who want to be the proverbial knights in shining armour for the Conference allege that Pakistan is holding up consensus on a fissile material cut-off treaty and thereby flouting international will. This is quite simply not true. Pakistan is in favour of ensuring that the Conference on Disarmament remains true to its real calling, which is to negotiate nuclear disarmament. We also support preserving the Conference's rules of procedure, especially the consensus rule. We are ready to enter into substantive negotiations on nuclear disarmament, legally binding nuclear security assurances and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. However, those who are spearheading the campaign for a discriminatory fissile material treaty want it to be a custom-made instrument that disregards the issue of existing stocks.

Strangely enough, the contrived sense of urgency that we have encountered in regard to the Conference on Disarmament over the past year — though the stalemate goes much farther back in time — is eerily absent when it comes to the less than satisfactory state of affairs in the United Nations Disarmament Commission. Those who profess messianic concern for the Conference feel no compunction when thwarting consensus in the Commission or burdening its deliberations with redundancies and platitudes.

Pakistan, along with other member States of the 118-strong Non-Aligned Movement, has noted with appreciation the opportunity presented by the High-level Meeting recently convened by the Secretary-General to demonstrate our support for the multilateral disarmament agenda and strengthening the United Nations disarmament machinery. However, there is a need for a more comprehensive, equitable and substantive approach aimed at building a renewed international consensus to take forward the international agenda on disarmament and non-proliferation.

Accordingly, the NAM member States are presenting a draft resolution this year on convening the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (A/C.1/65/L.35). Only a conference such as this can provide a universal and inclusive arrangement to ensure substantive progress in disarmament and non-proliferation on an equitable basis, and realistic means by which to revitalize the disarmament machinery.

Rather than trying to attenuate or unravel the United Nations disarmament machinery, we should buttress it by providing it with more human and financial resources. With all its imperfections, this machinery offers us the best available universal structure for reviving the international consensus on disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. We have to approach these matters with due regard for the principles of sovereign equality and equal and undiminished security enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the first special session of the Assembly devoted to disarmament. We have to disabuse ourselves of the notion that, when it comes to security, some are more equal than others. We need to bear in mind that the solution to the issue of disarmament machinery lies in political will.

To conclude, allow me to take this opportunity to state on behalf of the sponsors, as well as my own country, Pakistan, that like in previous years we will be reintroducing the following draft resolutions: A/C.1/65/L.4, entitled "Regional disarmament"; A/C.1/65/L.5, entitled "Conclusion of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons"; A/C.1/65/L.6, entitled "Conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels; and A/C.1/65/L.7, entitled "Confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context".

In addition to the aforementioned draft resolutions, this year, Pakistan, in its capacity as the current Chair of the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), will be presenting the draft resolution on the report of the IAEA (A/C.1/65/L.10). We have already circulated the clean text received from Vienna to permanent missions in New York with a request for sponsorships. Action on the draft resolution is expected at a plenary meeting of the General Assembly on 8 November.

During the First Committee segment devoted to action on draft resolutions, we will be making a more detailed introduction of these texts. Meanwhile, it may be worth pointing out that Pakistan's traditional four resolutions have only been updated technically. Also, the IAEA report draft resolution is factual in content. We look forward to the consensus adoption of all five draft resolutions.

**Mrs. Chaimongkol** (Thailand): Thailand believes that disarmament remains a key element in strengthening global security and promoting international stability in today's world. Efforts have been undertaken through the multilateral disarmament machinery to advance disarmament in all its aspects in order to build a safer world.

To make genuine progress, reinforcing and reinvigorating the United Nations disarmament machinery is essential. It will be necessary to address the effectiveness of the Conference on Disarmament, recognized as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum for the international community. Thailand therefore welcomed the convening of the High-level Meeting on Revitalizing the Work of the Conference on Disarmament and Taking Forward Multilateral Disarmament Negotiations, held on 24 September. The High-level Meeting presented a good opportunity for all of us to collectively encourage progress in the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

The international community has seen some positive developments in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation this year at both the multilateral and bilateral levels, including the adoption by consensus of the Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. I)) and the signing of the New START treaty between the Russian Federation and the United States. Yet much remains to be done, both on weapons of mass destruction and on conventional weapons, and the Conference on Disarmament continues to have a role to play in this regard.

As the work of the Conference on Disarmament deals directly with an issue of global concern, Thailand welcomes the fact that all States Members of the United Nations were invited to participate in the High-level Meeting. As an Observer State of the Conference, Thailand shares an interest in seeing the work progress.

We commend the concerted efforts made by the six Presidents of the 2010 session of the Conference. We also stand ready to support efforts to overcome the present stalemate so that overdue multilateral negotiations may commence as soon as possible.

Thailand shares with other interested Observer States a common belief that, if the work of the Conference is to be more effective, it needs to be transparent and more inclusive, which has led to the creation of the informal group of the Observer States to the Conference on Disarmament in March this year. The group is composed of States from different geographical regions, all of which are guided by common principles of both engaging in and contributing effectively to the Conference's activities. As the group's coordinator, Thailand was honoured to deliver a joint statement on its behalf at the High-level Meeting.

The High-level Meeting provided a unique opportunity to assess the work of the Conference on Disarmament and explore how its work may be revitalized. Thailand recalls that the membership of the Conference has remained at 65 Member States — approximately one third of the entire United Nations membership. It has been more than a decade since 1999, when such a review of the membership of the Conference last took place. The current membership of the Conference is thus far from representative of the broad spectrum to be found in the international community today.

Thailand therefore reaffirms its position on the issue of expansion of the membership of the Conference on Disarmament. We also reiterate our call for the appointment of a special coordinator on expansion of the membership for 2011 in order to give new impetus to the process.

It is our belief that institutional and substantive aspects can be addressed in parallel. Although there has been broad concern about the current stalemate within the Conference on Disarmament, as well as broad agreement on the need for the Conference to resume its substantive work, institutional issues should not be neglected, as they can also help to revitalize and reinvigorate the work of the Conference. An expansion of the membership of the Conference would at least reflect the intention of the Conference to move towards addressing its deficiencies.

In this regard, Thailand welcomes the concrete actions suggested by the Secretary-General in the Chair's summary of the High-level Meeting (see A/65/496, annex), including a thorough review of the issues raised during the Meeting by his Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters. It is our hope that expansion of the membership will be among the key issues that the Conference on Disarmament addresses when it resumes work in 2011.

The multilateral disarmament machinery has long been available for use. Yet it can only facilitate discussion and negotiation; initiatives and actions come from States themselves. We all here wish to see the multilateral disarmament machinery become more effective and produce outcomes. It is up to us, the States, to exercise the political will to make it happen.

This year, the international community has generated important momentum, including through the High-level Meeting. We should continue to build upon those recent positive developments. Thailand hopes that the strong political will shown at the High-level Meeting will continue and lead to concrete follow-up activities that will help revitalize the work of the Conference on Disarmament. We must work together to ensure that it lives up to the world's expectations and remains relevant to addressing current security challenges.

**Mr. Gartshore** (Canada): Canada was supportive of the Secretary-General's efforts to convene, on 24 September, the High-level Meeting on Revitalizing the Work of the Conference on Disarmament and Taking Forward Multilateral Disarmament Negotiations. We commend the Secretary-General's initiative and look forward to addressing existing weaknesses in disarmament machinery. Accordingly, Canada is pleased to co-sponsor draft resolution A/C.1/65/L.34/Rev.1 introduced this morning by Austria on the follow-up to the High-level Meeting.

Success in regard to disarmament machinery hinges upon political will, without which disarmament machinery cannot function as intended. Canada has expressed its willingness to see next year's session of the General Assembly examine how the work being considered in the Conference on Disarmament should be pursued if the Conference does not commence substantive work on its agenda, including negotiations, before the end of its 2011 session.

*(spoke in French)*

Canada is concerned about the ongoing deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament. Deliberations and negotiations play meaningful and distinct roles in the disarmament work of the United Nations. This complementarity was originally recognized by the General Assembly in 1978 and has resulted in the important duality between the role of the Disarmament Commission as a deliberative body and the Conference on Disarmament as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating body. The Conference on Disarmament has increasingly spent its time deliberating almost exclusively on procedural issues, thus failing to fulfil its own mandate as a negotiating forum.

The responsibility to make that body and other aspects of the machinery function effectively does not lie with only five or 65 countries, but with all United Nations Member States. We must collectively address the serious challenges posed by, among other factors, the fact that a small minority is blocking the Conference on Disarmament from doing what it is supposed to do — negotiate. We must assume our responsibility as accountable members of the international community to explore all avenues to make the Conference on Disarmament fulfil its mandate and start negotiations promptly.

Beyond the Conference on Disarmament, we should make appropriate use of the international organizations, bodies, offices and units expressly designed to support the various international agreements that form part of the global non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament agenda. In particular, we would note the important work being done by, inter alia, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the Implementation Support Units of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention.

Canada, for its part, remains at the forefront of efforts to identify areas in which the multilateral disarmament machinery could be strengthened, and then work actively to respond. In this context, while Canada was pleased with the action plan adopted by consensus, we were disappointed by the inability of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to agree to much-needed reforms, including the establishment of an implementation support unit to

strengthen its review process. Nevertheless, we note the level of support the initiative garnered from a wide cross-section of States. Correspondingly, we look forward to continuing our consideration of potential ways forward to address the institutional deficit of the NPT.

Under your leadership of the First Committee, Sir, Canada looks forward to building on the impetus of the recent High-level Meeting to advance out work throughout the multilateral disarmament system and to identify opportunities as appropriate to comprehensively review the United Nations disarmament machinery. Such revision could include a new special session of the General Assembly on disarmament, but that is not required.

In closing, I wish to reiterate Canada's commitment to working with all delegations represented in the First Committee to produce draft resolutions for consideration by the General Assembly to work towards the goal of ensuring international peace and security.

**Mr. Rim Kap-soo** (Republic of Korea): As we all know, despite recent good news in other areas of disarmament, the Conference on Disarmament has been stalled by stand-offs and arguments since the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in 1996. Frustrated with its failure to keep abreast of recent advancements, some even question the very *raison d'être* of the Conference.

The High-level Meeting on Revitalizing the Work of the Conference on Disarmament and Taking Forward Multilateral Disarmament Negotiations convened by the Secretary-General on 24 September was one of the responses of the international community to the Conference on Disarmament. At the High-level Meeting, we again found that the reasons for the impasse in the Conference process are various and complex, and that the answers to these problems are also not simple. The long-standing deadlock was attributed to some concerns on which no country is willing to make a compromise. It is clear that, in order for the Conference on Disarmament to move forward, each country should demonstrate more political flexibility with respect to security considerations and *modi operandi*. Once countries exhibit some flexibility and a spirit of cooperation, the Conference may evolve in keeping with the rapidly changing disarmament

climate, injecting fresh impetus into the negotiations process.

We believe that the members of the Conference on Disarmament will be able to resolve the deadlock on the basis of existing agreements, such as the 1995 Shannon mandate and last year's document CD/1864, without prejudice to the comprehensive and balanced approach required in addressing all the major issues in the Conference. While we believe that this is the appropriate time to begin negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty, we should also find ways to discuss other major issues.

My delegation looks forward to the review of the Advisory Board on the Disarmament Matters of the Secretary-General on the issues raised at the 24 September High-level Meeting. As the Korean delegation proposed at the Meeting, we may consider establishing a high-level panel of eminent persons group with special focus on the functioning of the Conference on Disarmament under the auspices of the Secretary-General.

The Conference should and can be revived as a key part of the robust machinery of the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime. It is my sincere hope that the Conference will reach a consensus on the programme of work at its first plenary meeting in 2011, thus enabling it to begin substantive negotiations. My delegation believes that the time is ripe to push ahead with the work of the Conference on Disarmament. To that end, it is imperative that we maintain the momentum gained at the 24 September High-level Meeting and use the discussions as a valuable starting point for developing practical measures for facilitating negotiations in the Conference.

We fully support draft resolution A/C.1/65/L.34/Rev.1, on the follow-up to the High-level Meeting, introduced by the Austrian delegation.

**Mr. Zinsou** (Benin) (*spoke in French*): It is my great honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/65/L.9, on the report of the Disarmament Commission (A/65/42). The draft resolution aims to define the modalities of the 2011 session, taking into account the prior work of that body, as indicated in its report to the General Assembly. The Commission works according to the role conferred on it by the relevant decisions of the General Assembly. By adopting the draft resolution before it, the Assembly

would take note of the Commission's report, which relates the work of the Commission in 2010 and contains proposals and recommendations for the 2011 session.

The draft resolution reaffirms the importance of further enhancing cooperation among the First Committee, the Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament. In adopting the draft resolution the General Assembly would request the Commission to continue its work in accordance with its mandate, as set forth in paragraph 118 of the Final Document of the tenth special session of the General Assembly (S-10/2) and other relevant instruments, and to make every effort to achieve specific recommendations on the items on its agenda.

The draft resolution also specifies the items on the Commission's agenda for 2011. There are three. To that effect the Commission is asked to meet from 4 April to 22 April 2011 and to submit a substantive report to the General Assembly during its sixty-sixth session. The Secretary-General is requested to transmit to the Disarmament Commission the annual report of the Conference on Disarmament along with all official reports of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly relating to disarmament matters, and to render all assistance that the Commission may require for implementing the resolution. Under the draft resolution, the General Assembly would decide to include in the provisional agenda of its sixty-sixth session the item entitled "Report of the Disarmament Commission".

Those are the proposals contained in the draft resolution before the General Assembly for determining the modalities of the Commission's 2011 session. I would like to underscore that the draft resolution does not require the presentation of an opinion on the programme budget implications for the United Nations. It has always been adopted by consensus, and I hope that it will be so again at this session.

**Ms. Higgie** (New Zealand): There have been some significant norm-setting achievements in recent years with the adoption of a number of texts in the field of conventional weapons, and we have just embarked, this time under United Nations auspices, on another such exercise for an arms trade treaty. They have led, and in the case of the arms trade treaty will

lead, to significant improvements in the circumstances of everyday life for a large number of human beings.

However, in other humanitarian law or disarmament contexts, we can point to little progress. The current inertia, particularly in the Conference on Disarmament, is of significant concern and disappointment to New Zealand. Indeed, our frustration may not be new. New Zealand was part of a group of countries that put together a proposal to progress disarmament negotiations in 2005 in response to the stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament at that time. If that makes New Zealand one of the shining knights of disarmament in the Conference, I would note that we have been on our horse for some time now. In 2005, we deemed the deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament unacceptable, and still do, but it is particularly regrettable now against the current backdrop of the more propitious global climate for disarmament.

In those circumstances, New Zealand remains grateful for the efforts of the Secretary-General to move the disarmament agenda forward. We are pleased to join a wide range of other countries here in co-sponsoring draft resolution A/C.1/65/L.34/Rev.1 to take forward the outcomes of the High-level Meeting held on 24 September. As noted by the Austrian Ambassador just this morning in introducing the draft resolution, the text recognizes current efforts to revitalize the disarmament machinery and to secure progress in multilateral disarmament. Those efforts must remain on our agenda.

It is our hope that, certainly by the time we meet here in the First Committee next year, progress on revitalizing the disarmament machinery will have been achieved and negotiations will be well under way. That would be a development in which we could indeed rejoice. All of us have a stake in ensuring that the Conference on Disarmament and the broader disarmament machinery can respond effectively to the demands of global security. At the moment, they do not. Let us work together to change that.

**Mr. Ferami** (Islamic Republic of Iran): The continuous challenge to multilateralism in the field of disarmament and international security is a source of concern. Indeed, addressing that challenge requires the genuine political will and cooperation of all States.

In that context, we stress the need to further promote multilateralism, which is the core principle in



the area of disarmament on the basis of universal, balanced, non-discriminatory and transparent negotiations. As the Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran stated during the High-level Meeting on 24 September, in our view the existing institutions for the deliberation and negotiation of disarmament issues are efficient and adequate if there is sufficient political will.

Unfortunately, certain countries want to take advantage of those bodies merely for the advancement of their own individual interests. Such States are reluctant even to consider disarmament issues in a comprehensive and balanced manner and to take into account the security interests of all States.

We believe that the inability of the Conference on Disarmament to undertake the substantive work on its agenda is not due to its structure or working methods, but mostly arises from the unwillingness of the nuclear-weapon and some other States to agree on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work and their refusal to deal with all core issues on an equal footing. In our negotiations within the disarmament machinery, we shall always stress the rule of law rather than the rule of power and the force of logic rather than the logic of force.

The Conference on Disarmament, as mandated by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-I), is and should remain the single multilateral negotiating body on disarmament. Moreover, its role in the field of nuclear disarmament should be strengthened. Since the Conference on Disarmament was established and mandated by SSOD-I, in the view of the Islamic Republic of Iran the only eligible forum to modify its mandate or rules of procedure, if necessary, is the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Accordingly, we stress the importance of convening the fourth special session. Indeed, such a meeting would be an appropriate forum for discussing and directing the ongoing trends regarding substantive and institutional issues related to disarmament.

In conclusion, we stress that, in dealing with the disarmament machinery, exclusive and discriminatory approaches should be avoided and the security interests of all States taken into consideration.

**Ms. Kennedy** (United States of America): I thank you, Sir, for giving me the opportunity today to review the recent High-level Meeting on Revitalizing the

Work of the Conference on Disarmament and Taking Forward Multilateral Disarmament Negotiations.

I would also like to discuss how we believe the international community can best contribute to a decision by the Conference on Disarmament when it reconvenes next January to adopt and implement a programme of work that we believe should, indeed, include a mandate for the early negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). We very much applaud the dedication of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to the achievement of comprehensive and balanced disarmament goals, as well as his initiative in calling the High-level Meeting. We also appreciate the efforts of some States to formulate a draft resolution on the appropriate follow-up (A/C.1/65/L.34/Rev.1).

The desire to make progress on disarmament and non-proliferation is widely shared by the international community, and most definitely by my Government. I am honoured to represent a President whose drive and passion has shaped an extraordinary agenda of disarmament and non-proliferation goals. From his first day in office, President Obama underscored his eagerness to engage fully in international forums. He is not a President who is "content with the status quo".

Once a respected institution, the Conference on Disarmament has fallen into dysfunction and ill repute after more than a dozen years of deadlock. It pains me to say that because, of course, I represent my Government at that institution. However, I certainly can personally attest to the fact that it is afflicted by an impasse over an inability to tackle the key issues that face us today. It is vital that Governments have an energetic and effective multilateral forum in which to conduct serious international arms control negotiations and discussions if we are to make serious progress towards a safe and secure world without nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction.

The United States was highly encouraged when, in May 2009, the Conference on Disarmament approved by consensus a work programme, including mandates for FMCT negotiations and for substantive discussions on the other core issues before the Conference: nuclear disarmament, the prevention of an arms race in outer space and negative security assurances. Our delegation in Geneva was and remains eager to roll up our sleeves and get to work on the complicated and difficult negotiations of an FMCT and to engage on the other core issues of great interest to us

all. Unfortunately, the will of the majority in Geneva continues to be frustrated by at least one State unwilling to allow the Conference on Disarmament to initiate FMCT negotiations.

Our Government appreciates the fact that an FMCT would have profound security implications for countries that have unsafeguarded nuclear facilities, including the United States. Consequently, we expect that an eventual FMCT negotiation, at the Conference on Disarmament or elsewhere, will have to explore fully those and other security issues. The United States envisions that every State participating in such negotiations would have ample opportunity to defend its interests and to ensure that an FMCT does not harm vital national interests.

Once FMCT negotiations start, whether in the Conference on Disarmament, as is our preference, or elsewhere, they must proceed by consensus, and each participating State must retain the sovereign right to determine whether to adhere to the resulting treaty. With such principles in place, no country need fear the prospect of FMCT negotiations, which we would see as governed, of course, by the Shannon mandate. Therefore, it strikes us as unwarranted for any single country to abuse the consensus principle and to thereby frustrate everyone else's desire to resume serious disarmament efforts in the Conference on Disarmament. We believe that such negotiations will take many years. Therefore, we should start as soon as possible.

In April 2009 in Prague, President Obama laid out his agenda for practical steps for moving towards a nuclear-weapon-free world. Since then, the United States and the international community have made notable progress. In the midst of that progress, however, the continuing stalemate at the Conference on Disarmament, in the words of my Government, sticks out like a sore thumb. Consequently, the United States fully supports the Secretary-General's effort to revive the Conference from its many years of stalemate. We share his view that the Conference on Disarmament's 2009 work programme represents a common denominator and that the Conference should adopt and implement it at its first plenary session next January.

We also welcome the thoughtful proposal of the Secretary-General that his Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters make a thorough study of the broader arms control machinery (see A/65/496, annex).

We would certainly hope that such a study would also look at the United Nations Disarmament Commission, whose output appears similarly inadequate to the great disarmament challenges facing us. We also note the suggestions made by a number of speakers today that the First Committee should also be looked at.

If we are serious about making a world without nuclear weapons a reality, then we must start initiating work now on a treaty to end the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. It remains the strong preference of the United States to negotiate an FMCT in the Conference on Disarmament. However, after well over a decade of inaction in Geneva, the patience of many Governments, including my own, is running out. If efforts to start negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament continue to stall, those Governments that wish to negotiate an FMCT and tackle other serious arms control issues will have to consider other options for moving that process forward.

It is long past time for the Conference on Disarmament to get back to work. That is not a threat. It is simply the fact that such disarmament work is so vital to the international community. In particular, we believe that an FMCT is too important for the international community to allow the Conference's dysfunction and the needless objections of any one State to dictate the pace of progress on disarmament. Therefore, the United States will continue to support other international efforts to identify a way forward for consensus-based FMCT negotiations to begin in Geneva early next year.

**Mr. Rao (India):** In accordance with its Charter, the United Nations has a central role and primary responsibility in the sphere of disarmament. The first special session of the General Assembly on disarmament created the current disarmament machinery, comprising the triad of the First Committee of the General Assembly, the United Nations Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament. The United Nations disarmament machinery is the mechanism by which we give expression and coherence to international efforts in the area of disarmament and international security.

We recognize the importance of and are committed to strengthening the First Committee. The First Committee embodies our faith in the benefit of collective action and multilateral approaches in

resolving global issues of peace, security and development.

India attaches importance to the Conference on Disarmament as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum for discussing legal instruments of global applicability. When the required political will was generated, a multilateral, verifiable and non-discriminatory treaty eliminating an entire category of weapons of mass destruction — that is, the Chemical Weapons Convention — was negotiated in Geneva. While we share the widespread disappointment that we have not been able to reach agreement on commencing negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament for many years, we do not believe that the current impasse arises from the disarmament machinery per se or its rules of procedure. Since the Conference's decisions have an impact on the national security of Member States, it is logical that it remain a Member State-driven forum and conduct its work and adopt its decisions by consensus.

In a demonstration of India's support for the work of the Conference on Disarmament, India's External Affairs Minister, Mr. S. M. Krishna, participated in the High-level Meeting held on 24 September, where he said:

“India welcomes the Secretary-General's initiative to convene this meeting. We believe that its main purpose is to send a clear message of support for the Conference on Disarmament as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum and to provide political impetus to the multilateral disarmament agenda.

“The Conference on Disarmament adopted a consensus decision in May 2009 on its programme of work, which included immediate commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). Such negotiations, which we support, are without prejudice to India's principled position on other agenda items, in particular the priority issue of nuclear disarmament. We share the disappointment expressed here by a number of speakers that the Conference on Disarmament has been prevented from undertaking its primary task of negotiating multilateral treaties. We reaffirm our support for the Conference on Disarmament as the single multilateral negotiating forum, recognized as such by the international

community. We also support the immediate commencement of FMCT negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament as part of its programme of work in early 2011.”

The United Nations Disarmament Commission has discharged an indispensable function by providing a universal deliberative forum for building consensus on disarmament and international security issues. The Commission has produced several important sets of guidelines and recommendations for the General Assembly, inter alia, the guidelines and confidence-building measures on verification and international arms transfers. Indeed, it is the only universal forum that provides for in-depth consideration of specific disarmament issues and that can help to bring back coherence and consensus to the currently fragmented international disarmament agenda. We encourage those who are concerned about the Disarmament Commission to engage more seriously in its work.

The Secretariat, in particular the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), has an important responsibility to assist States in upholding the role of United Nations forums. We believe that UNODA should be strengthened in order to facilitate the implementation of permanent treaty bodies under the United Nations, such as the Biological Weapons and the Chemical Weapons Conventions.

Expertise in the Office's Geneva branch on the subject of small arms and light weapons should also be strengthened in order to bring greater coherence to the work undertaken in New York and Geneva. The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), too, needs to be fully enabled with resources to realize its potential. It deserves greater support from the regular budget of the United Nations to enable it to be able to generate independent and long-term research on disarmament issues. UNIDIR should be at the forefront of research on nuclear disarmament so that it can respond to current expectations. That task cannot be accomplished when the Institute is overdependent on voluntary contributions and thus cannot devote human resources to priority issues on a sustainable basis.

Further, India believes that, in order to foster greater awareness of disarmament issues and to strengthen global collective will in favour of global disarmament objectives, the United Nations should make greater efforts to promote disarmament and non-proliferation education. The recommendations of

the 2002 United Nations study (A/57/124) remain an indispensable guide in that respect.

With regard to the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters, we believe that that body should be more representative so that it can reflect the broadest range of perspectives. It should take an inclusive and forward-looking approach to global disarmament issues, rather than attempt to be a preparatory committee of one or another treaty.

A final point before I conclude is that there is the impression that our failure to address substantive

disarmament and international security issues is due to procedural flaws and inherent inefficiency in the disarmament machinery. We need to remind ourselves that a bad workman often quarrels with his tools. In an interdependent world, only inclusive multilateral processes can balance the interests of important stakeholders, identify win-win situations that promote international security, and advance legally binding agreements that can be sustained over time. We have no better alternative than to strengthen the universal multilateral ideal and the institutions that it engenders.

*The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.*