
Conference on Disarmament

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English

Final record of the one thousand one hundred and seventy-eighth plenary meeting

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President: Mr. Mikhail Khvostov..... (Belarus)

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The President (*spoke in Russian*): I declare open the 1178th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Before turning to the list of speakers, I should like to inform you that we are restricting ourselves to a formal plenary meeting today, and I do not intend to make it informal. I should like, if I may, to make some introductory remarks.

Continuing the discussion we began on 9 March on document CD/WP.559 — a draft decision for the establishment of a programme of work for the 2010 session introduced by the President of the Conference — I should like once again to return to the matter of the President's objective in introducing this document to the Conference.

Of course, the President has both a legal and a moral duty to the Conference, under rule 29 of the rules of procedure, according to which the President shall draw up a programme of work and present it to the Conference for consideration. The Conference then decides whether it can adopt a decision on the document or not, taking rule 18 into consideration. This is the responsibility of the member States, which are represented here by their national delegations. If delegations wish to improve on the document, they may do so by making relevant proposals. If they wish to adopt the document as proposed, they may also do that. If they do not wish to look at the document, they may reflect on rule 18 of the rules of procedure.

Of course, the President also had a political aim, resulting from the policy objective expressed in the brief mandate of the Conference set out in General Assembly resolution S-10/2 of 30 June 1978, namely that the Conference is a forum for disarmament negotiations. To begin the negotiations, we need a document in the shape of a programme of work. Clearly, the title of a piece of international legislation that might result from the negotiations cannot be determined in advance in the programme of work. The title will be decided by the content of the document. Who among us here today could give the full name of the Inhumane Weapons Convention?

I also asked myself the question that I asked during my consultations with the Group of 21. Can it be that the actual situation and the international political conditions that allowed us to adopt General Assembly resolution 64/29 without a vote on 2 December 2009 have changed so fundamentally that we cannot today be bound, either politically or morally, by the decision we took then? I am not looking for an answer to this question, as I am sure it is obvious to the overwhelming majority of us here.

Document CD/WP.559 expresses the opinion of the President and cannot be considered to express either the position or the opinion of all member States of the Conference. But I would like to underline that it is the result of all the discussions that have been held and the decisions that have been adopted and I would again remind you of document CD/1864, and the fact that the document submitted expresses the opinion of the President and of many delegations.

I recall a scene from the children's book, *Alice in Wonderland*, where Alice is playing croquet with the Queen. The conditions of the game are most unusual: the croquet-ground is all ridges and furrows, the balls are live hedgehogs and the mallets live flamingoes. Our heroine, Alice, sees how difficult it is to play when everything around is alive.

As President, I have always remembered that all delegations have their national interests in the Conference and, of course, they have to defend them. I have tried to take into account the approaches of the member States and to ensure that the document is made up of elements supported by most States, both last year and now.

I should now like to propose that you make your comments on the proposed draft document and so return to my list of speakers. I should like to give the floor to the Ambassador of Brazil, Mr. Macedo Soares. You have the floor.

Mr. Macedo Soares (Brazil): Mr. President, I wish to thank you for all your efforts to adopt a programme of work and especially for document CD/WP.559. It is, we all know, the result of intensive consultations and I trust it enjoys wide support, short of getting consensus. In this regard, I would like to make a brief comment.

I have observed that in the culture of the Conference on Disarmament the absence of consensus is understood as inevitably leading to paralysis. One or more delegations announce their opposition and, as a result, all efforts are suspended. Perhaps it is useful to remind ourselves that while requiring consensus for the taking of decisions, our rules of procedure do not prohibit further negotiations from being conducted in order to circumvent divergences.

My delegation hereby declares that it is ready to work with every delegation in order to find suitable alternatives that could bring the prompt adoption of a programme of work. You yourself, Mr. President, have just mentioned the possibility of improving on your document. I do not know if this is the right word, but in order to make it “acceptable” or “not unacceptable”, my delegation is ready to work with all interested delegations.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the Ambassador of Brazil for his statement and his support. I should like now to give the floor to the next speaker, the distinguished Ambassador of Spain, Mr. Gil Catalina. Sir, you have the floor.

Mr. Gil Catalina (Spain): Mr. President, I am taking the floor on behalf of the European Union. Since this is the first time I have taken the floor under your presidency, let me congratulate you on the assumption of your duties and wish you all success.

The European Union welcomes the fact that you have provided us with CD/WP.559. In a previous statement on behalf of the European Union, I pointed to the need to have a document on the table which would allow us to start working. Now we have it, and we wish to thank you for it.

The European Union considers CD/WP.559 a comprehensive and balanced document. We welcome transparent and open debate on this document. The European Union remains ready to listen to all members of the Conference on Disarmament. We will actively work towards reaching consensus, with a view to having a programme of work as soon as possible. CD/WP.559 provides a good basis for that.

Finally, I wish to say that the European Union firmly supports all the efforts the P-6 may undertake to achieve this goal.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the distinguished Ambassador of Spain speaking on behalf of the European Union. I should now like to give the floor to any other delegations who would like to speak.

I can see that the representative of Canada would like to take the floor and I am pleased to give it to her. Madam, you have the floor.

Ms. Milligan (Canada): Mr. President, Canada is pleased that the Conference on Disarmament now has a draft programme of work before it for consideration by delegations. Canada can support document CD/WP.559 presented by you earlier this week. Our delegation looks forward to its earliest adoption.

We were encouraged by the fact that this document maintains the careful balance that we achieved last year in CD/1864, and that it usefully blends into one document both the substantive elements of our work and the procedural aspects.

Canada also supports your assessment that this text is the best possible compromise that the Conference on Disarmament now has at hand. This document offers flexibility for moving forward on a range of agenda items, while identifying that the agenda item ripest for negotiations in the Conference is a treaty banning the production of fissile material.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the distinguished representative of Canada for her statement and should like now to give the floor to the distinguished representative of Mexico. You have the floor.

Mr. Basave (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Mr. President. On behalf of the delegation of Mexico, I wish to express my appreciation for the submission of this document, which will undoubtedly help us to reconcile our differences and reach a consensus that will enable us to begin work.

Both the current international situation and the issue of global security impress upon us the need to end this paralysis and get the Conference on Disarmament moving. In this regard, my delegation also wishes to thank the distinguished Ambassador of Brazil and take up some of the issues that he raised. I believe that he has done well to highlight the complexity of the working culture that we have developed in the Conference on Disarmament and that has led us into this state of paralysis. We fully share the view of the Ambassador of Brazil. We believe that the consensus rule does not give any delegation a veto right. If we must reach consensus, and the vast majority are willing to work, I think that the Conference on Disarmament should work; at the very least, we should act in good faith and make every constructive effort to reach the desired consensus.

Indeed, the rules of procedure impose the consensus rule upon us, not to carry out consultations but to take decisions. Naturally, one could argue that initiating dialogue or starting to exchange opinions is in itself a decision. However, I believe it is important to reiterate that consensus does not give any delegation a veto right.

Last year, Mexico endorsed the programme of work submitted by the distinguished Ambassador of Algeria and at that point we were willing to undertake substantive work. We wish to express our appreciation for the work carried out by this year's P-6 over this period and the document that they have just submitted to us. We can now begin work, although we will still hear any objections.

Mexico has already made its position on fissile material clear: we are willing to work on a project that would also take into consideration existing fissile material stocks, such that the Treaty also becomes a treaty on disarmament, not merely on non-proliferation.

However, we understand that other delegations, in particular the nuclear Powers, are also willing to work on this basis. Therefore, Mr. President, we are willing to share views and finally begin work. Important events are coming and the Conference on Disarmament cannot remain in this state of paralysis. Allow us to once again express our appreciation for the submission of the document and reiterate our desire to continue working with you and the other Presidents. Thank you very much.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the distinguished Ambassador of Mexico for his statement and his support and would now like to give the floor to the distinguished representative of Argentina. Argentina, you have the floor.

Ms. Fogante (Argentina): Thank you very much, Mr. President. My delegation made a statement at this year's first plenary meeting and at the informal meeting on 4 February to establish the items that should be included in the 2010 programme of work. We considered it of particular importance to reflect the consensus reached in 2009 with the adoption of the decision contained in CD/1864.

We recognize that these items are contained in document CD/WP.559 and therefore appreciate that it was drafted and distributed during the previous plenary session. My delegation is prepared to use this document as a basis for our substantive work. Moreover, we have listened to delegations voice their concerns and explain their Government's position. We hope that all viewpoints on international security and disarmament can be reflected in a programme of work within the framework of this Conference.

In presenting the document, you recognized that it was not ideal but said that elements of the proposal had the support of most delegations. We agree, Mr. President, with your assessment that submitting the document is a way of giving new impetus to the Conference's work.

By distributing the proposal as a working paper you invite us to continue building on this foundation and to successfully adopt a programme of work, as we did last year. Finally, we understand — as did the Ambassador of Brazil, whose speech we fully endorse — the presentation of this document to be a step forward in the ongoing efforts of all member States to re-establish this Conference as a meaningful forum.

We shall support the efforts of the P-6 in finding alternatives that are acceptable to all member States. Thank you very much.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Argentina for her statement and her support and would now like to give the floor to the distinguished Ambassador of Bulgaria. Sir, you have the floor.

Mr. Ganev (Bulgaria): Mr. President, the Group of Eastern European States is satisfied to see a draft programme of work tabled in the Conference on Disarmament. This document is no doubt long overdue. Nevertheless, given the serious difficulties that the Conference has faced this year involving the different concerns, we think that the time is appropriate to begin an open and transparent debate on such a draft.

The Group of Eastern European States wishes to express its deep appreciation for the efforts deployed by you and your predecessor, Ambassador Hannan of Bangladesh, in exploring all possible ways of reaching an agreement on a programme of work. We wish to congratulate particularly you, Mr. President, for your persistence and sense of compromise, which are reflected in this draft document. This makes it flexible enough to allow all States' concerns to be properly addressed.

The draft decision you have distributed this week is the result of extensive and difficult consultations. It reflects in a spirit of compromise the understanding that the Conference on Disarmament should resume its substantive work as soon as possible. This is far from being an ideal document, but it provides us with a realistic tool to address urgently the needs of the situation.

The Group of Eastern European States has previously stated its support for document CD/1864, which lies at the basis of your draft proposal — that balanced and comprehensive document, which received unanimous support last year during the deliberations in the Conference on Disarmament and in United Nations General Assembly resolutions 64/29 and 64/64. Our understanding is that we should build upon the achievements of last year in order to advance the process in the Conference. Therefore, we wish to welcome the draft decision for the establishment of a programme of work for the 2010 session, proposed by you in document CD/WP.559, and invite all delegations to examine it carefully.

Allow me, in addition to the statement on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States, to make a couple of remarks in my national capacity.

Bulgaria is one of the Conference presidents this year. It is seriously concerned by the continuing inability of this body to fulfil its mandate. My understanding is that although the President has the important task of proposing ways and means to overcome a stalemate, it is the shared responsibility of all member States to make full use of the President's proposal. Safeguarding the credibility of the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum is a matter of common concern and therefore requires a shared sense of ownership of what is happening in this chamber. In our view, the document proposed by you is broad enough to reconcile the different concerns of all States and allows us to move forward.

As an incoming President, I wish to express my appreciation for your efforts and state our support for the draft decision.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the Ambassador of Bulgaria for his statement and his support for the document on the programme of work and would now like to give the floor to the distinguished representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Iran, you have the floor.

Mr. Hosseini (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. President, I would like to express my appreciation for your efforts to prepare a programme of work for the Conference on Disarmament based on comprehensiveness and consensus. We received the working paper contained in document CD/WP.559 and will consider it accordingly. We take note with appreciation of your comment that the working paper is aimed at preparing the ground for discussions on a programme of work for 2010, which would proceed according to the rules of procedure of the Conference. Therefore, it can be improved according to comments, views and proposals by the Conference members.

My delegation has on other occasions brought its position on the programme of work to the kind attention of the President and members of the Conference. At this juncture, I will briefly reiterate some key points to be considered in our deliberations on the Conference's programme of work for 2010.

In our view, a comprehensive and balanced programme of work to enable the Conference to start negotiations on the four core issues would best serve the purposes of the Conference as well as ensuring the safety and security of the whole international community.

Nuclear disarmament remains the highest priority for my delegation, as it does for most members of the Conference. This was clearly reflected in the statement of the Group of 21 on 2 February 2010. The programme of work should provide a negotiation mandate on this issue.

On a fissile material cut-off treaty, we said with no ambiguity that the issue of stocks and verification should be covered under a possible treaty. Such a treaty should be a clear and meaningful step towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in all its aspects. It should be a comprehensive, non-discriminatory and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty. Past production and existing stocks as well as the future production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices must be covered under the scope of the treaty. Any negotiation on a treaty which does not include stocks would have no content and consequently would be fruitless. I think we have to be clear in our programme of work on this important subject.

We also believe that negative security assurances and the prevention of an arms race in outer space should be dealt with seriously in the programme of work for 2010.

Mr. President, I request you to continue your efforts and consultations to provide the Conference on Disarmament with a programme of work responsive to these issues.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the distinguished representative of Iran for his statement and for his comments of which I most certainly take note.

I should now like to give the floor to the distinguished representative of Ukraine. Sir, you have the floor.

Mr. Maimeskul (*spoke in Russian*): Mr. President, since this is the first time I have taken the floor at this session of the Conference on Disarmament under your presidency, I should like first of all to recognize your contribution and that of your predecessor, Ambassador Hannan, in trying to achieve progress in the work of the Conference.

In that context, I wish to assure you, as Ambassador of Belarus, a friendly neighbouring State to Ukraine, that we fully support your efforts to bring about the adoption of the Conference on Disarmament's programme of work.

(Mr. Maimeskul *continued in English*)

Mr. President, we highly appreciate the efforts you have made to achieve positive results in order to begin our substantive work as quickly as possible. In this regard, I would like to welcome your submission of document CD/WP.559, which contains a draft programme of work for 2010.

We are proceeding from the necessity of adopting the relevant decision. Your approach, which builds upon the programme of work adopted by consensus last year — as contained in CD/1864, the basic document — provides an opportunity for us to state that the delegation of Ukraine does not face any problems with it.

In this regard, I would like to point out that the Ukrainian delegation gives its full support to the statement delivered today by the Ambassador of Bulgaria, Mr. Gancho Ganey, on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): Thank you, Ambassador, for your support for the document before the Conference.

I should now like to give the floor to the distinguished representative of Poland. Poland, you have the floor.

Mr. Lusiński (Poland): Mr. President, I would like to support the delegations who have voiced their appreciation for your timely and adequate efforts expressed in CD/WP.559. The document provides us with a chance to reach an agreement on the format of conducting negotiations. Poland is glad that this proposal has been provided by Belarus, our neighbour and a country that has itself a distinguished record of disarmament activities.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I should like to thank the distinguished representative of Poland for his statement, for his support for the document and for the good atmosphere of cooperation that Poland is trying to create in the Conference.

I should now like to give the floor to the distinguished representative of Ireland. Sir, you have the floor.

Mr. Corr (Ireland): Mr. President, I would like to join the representative of Spain, on behalf of the European Union, and others in expressing appreciation to you for having presented the Conference with a draft programme of work in the form of document CD/WP.559. As stated by you when introducing the paper, your doing so is in line with the requirement placed on the Conference by its rules of procedure to adopt its programme of work at the beginning of its annual session.

We are pleased that you have based the draft programme of work on the programme of work adopted by this Conference in 2009 by consensus, as well as on resolutions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, also by consensus. We regard the draft

as an excellent effort by you to find the broadest possible support among the 65 member States of this Conference. My delegation thanks you for the careful work and consultation which you have invested in its elaboration.

It is, of course, as you said yourself, only a proposal, and it is the right of any member State to bring forward suggestions for amendments to it. While the document is not as we would have written it if we had only our own national position to think about, we recognize the difficulty of accommodating the views of all member States. We will accordingly not be proposing any amendments. We strongly believe that any amendments proposed should be of a nature to increase the chances of the document finding consensus among member States. The proposal of amendments that would move the document away from consensus would not facilitate the return of this Conference to the substantive work of negotiation which is its *raison d'être*. My delegation could also support the views expressed earlier by the Ambassador of Brazil.

In closing, allow me to thank you once again for your work as President of the Conference, and to assure your successor of the full support of my delegation.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I should like to thank the distinguished Ambassador of Ireland for his statement, for his support for the work of the presidency and for the words of support for the document before us.

I would now like to give the floor to the distinguished representative of the Russian Federation. You have the floor.

Mr. Vasiliev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Mr. President, the Russian delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the distinguished representative of Bulgaria on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States in support of document CD/WP.559 that you have put before us, which contains a proposal on the programme of work for our Conference for 2010.

Allow me also to express my deep appreciation to you and your colleagues in the P-6 for the great amount of work, including many bilateral consultations, involved in drafting the proposed procedural decision for our Conference that would take the interests of all the member States into account. We note that the proposals it contains express to the extent possible the consensus achieved in the document adopted last year, CD/1864, and the subsequent proposals by the P-6 on its implementation. The President's working document is also fully based on consensus resolutions 64/29 and 64/64 adopted by the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session.

At the same time, we understand that the proposals contained in the document do not currently enjoy consensus. We consider that this does not diminish the value of the document in any way. Indeed, as suggested — and you may count on our delegation's full support in this — we could continue broad consultations on the basis of this document to try to reach a compromise agreeable to us all on the Conference's programme of work for the 2010 session.

At the same time, clearly, it must be recognized that the process could take a certain time. Agreement would be needed from capitals. Consequently, the Russian delegation would suggest that it could be useful to begin thematic discussions along the lines of the Conference's working agenda that we have adopted, at the same time as holding consultations on the programme of work. This would make it possible to compare our positions, first of all, on the key issues on the Conference's agenda and to see how prepared delegations would be to continue with substantive work on them and, ideally, of course, with negotiations.

In conclusion, Mr. President, given that — if our mathematical skills have not let us down — this is your last session as President, we should like to express our appreciation to

you and your team, to acknowledge you as representative of a State allied to the Russian Federation and, also, to note the contribution you have made to the work of this sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the distinguished representative of the Russian Federation for his statement, his support for the document and his proposals concerning the future of our work, which, I am sure, will be taken into consideration.

I should like in particular to underline that our countries have extremely good relations as allies, which Belarus cherishes and is proud of.

Now I should like to give the floor to the distinguished Ambassador of Germany. You have the floor.

Mr. Hoffmann (Germany): Mr. President, can I first of all say that I had been expecting that we would at some stage today also move into the informal session mode. I would have preferred to make my remarks in an informal session, but I am happy to make them in the formal session as well.

I associate myself of course with the statement made by the representative of Spain on behalf of the European Union.

Let me start off with some more general observations. For many decades, the Conference on Disarmament has had an agenda with some six or seven practically unchanged fundamental issues of arms control and disarmament on it, which the Conference is supposed to address or work on as a negotiating body. However, the Conference has been prevented from engaging in substantive work on any of these issues for well over a decade.

This sad state of affairs is of course well known to everybody in this hall. Whether it is known to the wider public is quite another question, let alone whether the wider public has the faintest idea why we have been and why we continue to be in such a situation. In fact I very much doubt that the wider interested public has any idea of what has been going on here over many years. Most probably the public assumes that the sheer fact of sessions taking place year-in-year-out at the Conference on Disarmament surely can only mean that serious disarmament work is going on here.

I fear many would be flabbergasted to learn that since the negotiation of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty the Conference on Disarmament has basically only been discussing what it should do next and many would be surprised to really understand what complex set of blockages, linkages and policies of preconditions and respective policies of denying requested clarifications were at the heart of this unsatisfactory situation.

And by the way, perhaps the objective of making the wider public more aware of what is actually going on or — to be more precise — not going on in the sole global disarmament forum should be enough reason to strengthen the role and position of NGOs in the Conference.

Now to turn to the subject at hand, last year it appeared that, at long last, agreement had been reached on what to work on in the Conference on Disarmament. This agreement did not only pertain to starting negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty, but I have to say that that perception is widespread and it is actually quite unfortunate, because it does not, to my mind, do justice to last year's work programme. In fact, the work programme adopted last year contained a very elaborate and differentiated approach to many of the issues on the Conference's agenda — that is why I referred to them in my opening remarks — and, as such, left many options open for the future. It is not only a work programme on negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. This is, I think, precisely the reason why in

May 2009 consensus could be established around this work programme, since many saw their priorities other than such a treaty being taken care of in a reasonably acceptable manner. Germany is among those who find other items on the Conference's agenda, like the prevention of an arms race in outer space or negative security assurances, very important issues to work on.

I think it is also worth keeping in mind that the 2009 work programme was worked out under the presidency of a distinguished representative of a member of the Group of 21, and I would express our appreciation to Ambassador Jazairy for that remarkable achievement.

Now, unfortunately, last year's work programme ran into difficulties when it came to implementing it. It has taken us well over half a year to find out in sufficient detail the substance of the reasons why not all delegations can support the May 2009 work programme approach any longer.

Let me expressly say at this point that we appreciate that the delegation of Pakistan set out its views in considerable detail on 18 February. While I need not dwell on the fact that we do not share much of the reasoning in this statement, I have no hesitation in acknowledging its impressive professional quality.

So it is good that we can now see much better where the problems lie. We strongly believe that the international community has a right to be told and to learn where member States stand on the issues on our agenda and for what reasons they wish or do not wish to start negotiations on these issues or some of these issues.

Germany does not favour approaches whereby one tries to prevent the sheer opening of negotiations on issues on the arms control agenda. Our point of departure is that if there is a widely held view that a certain issue should be dealt with by way of negotiations to seek legally-binding rules, it seems to us a highly problematic use of the consensus rule to prevent the international community from actually doing this. It is for this reason that I wish to commend you, Mr. President, for introducing document CD/WP.559 containing a draft decision for the establishment of a programme of work for the 2010 session. I understand very well that this was not an easy decision for you to take. But judging from what we have heard in the last couple of weeks there is indeed a very widely held view in this chamber that the approach in that document is the right one and that it should be pursued, and it was therefore right to put it before us in a working paper.

Now we know at the same time that the approach taken in the draft does not command consensus. But the thing is, we have to have a basis to work on if we want to arrive at a result which does indeed command broad consensus. We should simply not continue to make broad statements, but we should focus our work on concrete texts. So it is good that we have such a basis in writing before us now and I thank the President for that.

If you look at the paper closely it is not only about beginning negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. As I mentioned earlier, it also addresses other topics, using well thought-out language.

Now, if there are ways to improve that language, for instance, by bringing out more clearly future perspectives for certain items other than a fissile material cut-off treaty which may be of particular importance to some delegations, the German delegation would surely look at such proposals with an open mind. We do not think that take-it-or-leave-it methods are the way to go about such difficult issues, and it is not our desire to paint anyone into a corner. But, naturally, it is a matter for those who cannot readily support the draft as it stands before us to make such concrete drafting proposals.

As far as Germany is concerned, we can accept the draft as it stands. But of course we are interested in getting everybody on board. For this we need to have a concrete and

open discussion in this hall, and we should not accept a procedure any longer where, in back-room meetings between the President and some individual delegations, decisions are taken on what is possible and what is not without anybody in the outside world getting a chance to understand what the situation really is. At a time when many speak of a new dawn for nuclear arms control, with the perspective even of global zero, such nineteenth-century secret diplomacy methods surely should not be the order of the day anymore.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I should like to thank the distinguished Ambassador of Germany for his statement and for the principles and approaches he laid out and which I share, both as President and as head of my national delegation to the Conference.

Now I should like to give the floor to the distinguished representative of France. You have the floor.

Ms. Quanquin (France) (*spoke in French*): My delegation aligns itself fully with the statement made by Spain on behalf of the European Union. We should like to thank you for submitting document CD/WP.559. This proposal fulfils the wish we have repeatedly expressed for a draft programme of work that we can take as a basis for discussion. The document reflects the consensus that we reached last year. It follows faithfully the General Assembly resolutions adopted in December, both on the Conference and on the fissile materials treaty. We therefore think that it is the best available option.

We consider it very important that the document should enjoy the support of the entire 2010 team of six Presidents, the P-6, and that consensus on the basis of this proposal should be actively sought so that we can adopt a programme of work as soon as possible, which would allow us to get down to our substantive work. Mr. President, you can count on our delegation's full cooperation in this regard.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I should like to thank the distinguished representative of France for her statement, her support for the work of the President and the document we have before us, and her willingness to cooperate.

Now I should like to give the floor to the distinguished representative of the United States of America. You have the floor.

Mr. Larson (United States of America): Mr. President, first of all I would like to add the endorsement of my delegation to others this morning for the draft programme of work contained in CD/WP.559, and extend our thanks for your extensive consultative efforts throughout your presidency. We share the view that this paper encapsulates the prevailing view of the vast majority of Conference members and appropriately maintains the delicate balance of interests achieved after years of preliminary discussions.

Certain delegations have cited perceived deficiencies in this text. Indeed, a consistent thread in our discussions has been the observation that CD/1864, of which basic elements are present in the current working paper, is the product of well-debated, thoughtful compromise. This is an assessment we share.

In the spirit of compromise and in the interest of moving the process forward, last year we agreed to accept the programme of work, as drafted, recognizing that all members would have to make some compromises if the Conference were to agree on a work programme. While recognizing that minor modifications or updates might be justified in this text, we would urge that others demonstrate the flexibility and compromise needed to move the process forward.

My delegation considers it most important now to re-examine the draft's positive attributes and reaffirm them, and in this, we share a number of observations expressed this morning by the Ambassador of Germany.

Far from limiting prospects for making progress on the core issues of concern to all of us, your working paper sets no limits, establishes no prejudgements, and explicitly cites the possibility of future negotiations under any agenda item. This is not a restrictive document. Rather it is a document with a broad scope that addresses the concerns of all members in a systematic and practical manner. It is, in short, a way forward for all.

I would conclude by noting that the United States' support for CD/1864 included a concrete commitment to engage substantively, intensively and in good faith on all issues under consideration. We stand by that commitment and hope that all delegations will accept this common obligation in order for the Conference on Disarmament, at long last, to commence substantive deliberations on the issues before it.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I should like to thank the distinguished representative of the United States of America for his statement, his support for the document and the work of the President and his view of the Conference's future work.

Now I should like to give the floor to the distinguished Ambassador of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Mr. Duncan. Sir, you have the floor.

Mr. Duncan (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): Mr. President, since this is the first time I have taken the floor, may I offer my congratulations and wish you all success in your endeavours. The United Kingdom fully endorses the statement read by the Ambassador of Spain on behalf of the European Union, and it also supports your latest proposal.

The current phase of the efforts by the Conference on Disarmament to agree a programme of work has been under way for some four years. During that time, a remarkable cross-regional constituency has emerged seeking action. It has led us to the hope that consensus, if not unanimity, as my esteemed Mexican colleague quite rightly pointed out, would be possible, reflecting a predominant view of the world community: that the Conference on Disarmament has to play its part in getting us onto the road towards a world without nuclear weapons. And that predominant world view has been reiterated in the wider world community, notably at the United Nations General Assembly.

No one could credibly describe the emergence of consensus as "take-it-or-leave-it". It is with this in mind that successive presidencies of the Conference have attempted to capture this emerging consensus in a series of documents. As the German Ambassador explained, we, likewise, were pleased to see that it was a member of the Group of 21, Algeria, in its role as President of the Conference on Disarmament, that brought us the closest we have been to arranging the breakthrough we all seek.

It is also unsurprising that these documents put forward by our presidencies bear a remarkable similarity. The United Kingdom would agree with the comments by our esteemed Brazilian colleague that we must continue to look at possible iterations of these documents, as we have indeed done over the past four years.

It is very regrettable that we so far have not been able to achieve the breakthrough we seek. As I say, we agree with others that the task at hand is to see whether adjustments to the latest version, CD/WP.559, would allow work to proceed, while avoiding the trap of trying to negotiate a convention in its mandate. We do not need rules of procedure to tell us that in a negotiation, all issues are on the table, and this has been reaffirmed many times in our discussions.

It is also important that we reject efforts to disrupt this historically significant constituency for action in the Conference on Disarmament, at this very time in the action by the world community in the area of multilateral arms control and disarmament.

I would like to conclude by joining the comments by our German colleague to say that it is important not to forget that we are accountable, if not to our public opinion, certainly to the worldwide community of nation States whose views on the need for progress have repeatedly been made clear.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): Thank you, Ambassador, for your statement.

I should like now to give the floor to the distinguished representative of Switzerland. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. Lauber (Switzerland): Mr. President, like others, I would like to thank you and congratulate you on your efforts, which have led to the submission of this draft working programme, CD/WP.559. Like many delegations, we have been asking for several weeks for such a step to be taken. It seems to me that the discussion we are having this morning in this room confirms the value of having a concrete document before us as a basis for this open and transparent discussion among members of the Conference on Disarmament. Unfortunately, the discussion is still limited to procedural matters this morning, but I am hopeful. I refuse to give up hope that soon we will be able to actually go into the matters concerned and discuss substance.

After studying the draft programme, we share your assessment that this draft, based on last year's excellent consensus paper and on the discussions we have heard since, indeed reflects, if not yet a consensus, at least what the members of the Conference on Disarmament are probably most likely to be able to agree on as a work programme. My delegation is certainly ready to accept the document as it is.

My delegation would also be ready to go beyond what is in the current draft and to discuss wording. As pointed out by others, there might be more specific wording on the issues before the Conference, and we are looking forward to hearing the concrete proposals of colleagues on how to improve on the draft before us.

I would, however, at this point like to recall the responsibilities of all of us here, namely, the responsibility to start substantive work, to go from what we have as discussions on procedures and programmes and to really move on to substantive work as soon as possible. In this regard I would like to recall the importance of the fact that we actually have not just a responsibility but a very clear mandate to negotiate issues and priority issues, including a fissile material cut-off treaty, which in our opinion is still an essential pillar of the existing nuclear treaty framework.

I would also like to say that I believe that any proposals coming with the draft before us should therefore not just state national positions but always keep in mind that any proposals should try to help lead us to a consensus. I also believe that that is our shared responsibility.

I would be interested in hearing more from the Russian delegation with regard to their proposals on parallel work on substantive issues. We are interested in that. We believe however that currently the focus needs to be on the work programme. We need to get to consensus on the work programme as quickly as possible. I certainly agree with what the German Ambassador mentioned, that these discussions should continue in the open, transparently, in a plenary, informal or formal setting, but not go back to limited consultations with groups. It is much better to have this discussion out in the open.

In concluding, I would like to thank you again for your efforts. I encourage the future presidents of the Conference to continue on this track. I would like to underline again that we think it is very important for the P-6 presidents to work closely together on leading us to this consensus and into substantive work as soon as possible.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I should like to thank the distinguished Ambassador of Switzerland for his statement and his view of the prospects for our work.

I should like now to give the floor to the distinguished Ambassador of New Zealand. Madam, you have the floor.

Ms. Higgie (New Zealand): Thank you, Mr. President, for your ongoing leadership in trying to forge a draft programme of work for the Conference on Disarmament in 2010. New Zealand stands ready to support Belarus and your P-6 colleagues in any way we can.

We remain committed to working with all Conference members for a fully functional Conference on Disarmament that meets its mandate as a negotiating forum. We are pleased that you circulated CD/WP.559 earlier this week to help focus our deliberations on the programme of work.

We welcome your explanation that you have drawn on CD/1864 when producing CD/WP.559. As the most recent programme of work to attract consensus, it is entirely appropriate that we use CD/1864 as the base for our deliberations this year. Negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile materials remain a key priority for New Zealand.

We believe it imperative that we get negotiations under way. As we have said before, we regard it as our right and responsibility to raise all relevant issues within the framework of those negotiations. We should not delay the commencement of negotiations by trying to prejudge what outcome may be achieved. If that were to become the norm, very few international negotiations would ever get under way on any topic whatsoever, and multilateral diplomacy would grind to a halt.

The other issues contained in CD/1864 remain significant for global security and worthy of serious engagement. We see value therefore in the establishment of working groups on nuclear disarmament, negative security assurances and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. It is our view that the in-depth discussions envisaged in these working groups could pave the way for future negotiations at an opportune moment.

We hope that through your efforts and the flexibility and cooperation of all Conference members, we will secure agreement on a programme of work swiftly to allow our substantive work to begin. New Zealand can support CD/WP.559 and we hope for its early adoption.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I should like to thank the distinguished Ambassador of New Zealand for her support for the document and her view of how the Conference should continue its work.

I should like now to give the floor to the distinguished Ambassador of the Netherlands. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. van den Ijssel (Netherlands): Mr. President, let me start by saying that we associate ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Spain on behalf of the European Union. Like others, we very much welcome the submission of the concept work programme. We applaud you for doing this. After a period of "shadow-boxing", I think it is important that we now have a proposal on the table, or out in the open, as was said by some.

It will not come as a surprise to you or to others in this hall that the Netherlands can fully support your proposal. We think that the content of your proposal is an accurate reflection of the views of the overwhelming majority of States in this hall and of the world community at large, as expressed in United Nations General Assembly resolution 64/64, adopted in December.

A lot has happened in this hall since May 2009, but the logic which led to the adoption, by consensus, of CD/1864 has not changed. I think that your concept captures that logic. That does not mean that we are married to each and every word of it. We are always willing to look at proposals for changes, provided they have a fair chance of achieving consensus. So far, we have heard no such proposals.

To conclude, you have our full support regarding this concept programme of work. We hope it will lead us to doing what we are here for, which is substantive work and negotiations as soon as possible. In this regard, it is our continued view that we cannot afford to spend the whole year just on consultations about what we might do. If — and I hope this will not become a reality — we are not able to start working on the basis of an agreed work programme soon, we will have to look at other ways to do substantive work in this body. We should not accept another wasted year in the Conference on Disarmament.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): Thank you, Ambassador, for your support for the work of the President and the P-6, your support for the document, and your view of our future work using this document.

I should like now to give the floor to the distinguished Ambassador of India, Mr. Rao. Ambassador, you have the floor.

Mr. Rao (India): Mr. President, as this is the first time I have taken the floor under your presidency, let me take this opportunity to convey to you our warm congratulations as well as to underline our deep appreciation for the manner in which you have been conducting the work of the Conference. We would also like to thank you for undertaking consultations, including with India. We support your initiative to table CD/WP.559 to take forward the work of this Conference.

India attaches great importance to the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. We believe that the work of the Conference should be conducted in accordance with the rules of procedure, including the rule of consensus, to provide the necessary assurance that the security interests of member States are protected.

I would now like to offer the following comments with regard to India's perspectives on CD/WP.559.

India supports the early commencement of substantive work, on the basis of consensus on a programme of work that takes into account the interests of all delegations.

The Group of 21 has already indicated its support for the adoption of a comprehensive and balanced programme of work and includes the priority attached to nuclear disarmament, which India fully shares.

The Conference on Disarmament was able to adopt by consensus the programme of work for 2009 contained in CD/1864, which was itself the result of difficult compromise. Subsequently, General Assembly resolution 64/64, entitled "Report of the Conference on Disarmament", requested all States members to cooperate with the current President and successive Presidents in their efforts to guide the Conference to the early commencement of substantive work, including negotiations, in its 2010 session.

It may also be recalled that General Assembly resolution 64/29, regarding the treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, was adopted by consensus. This resolution urges the Conference to agree early in 2010 on a programme of work that includes the immediate commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. India supports the negotiation in the Conference on Disarmament of a verifiable treaty banning the future production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and nuclear explosive devices.

India will not stand in the way if there is an emerging consensus on the adoption of a programme of work for 2010 based on CD/WP.559, if such a decision facilitates the early commencement of substantive work in the Conference. However, if there is no consensus on the programme of work, it is incumbent on the President to continue consultations to build the necessary consensus on an acceptable programme of work. We do not favour reopening the long-standing consensus on a fissile material cut-off treaty, which is stated clearly in CD/1299, which is based on the consensus resolution adopted by the General Assembly in 1993.

The main vocation of the Conference is the negotiation of multilateral treaties of universal application. Discussions in the Conference or on the sidelines cannot be considered as negotiations, nor can they be binding on member States.

CD/WP.559 offers a realistic basis for taking the Conference in the desired direction. We hope that the Conference will soon commence substantive work.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I should like to thank the distinguished Ambassador of India for his statement and his proposals, particularly supporting the commencement of the substantive work of the Conference.

I should like now to give the floor to the distinguished representative of Sweden. Sweden, you have the floor.

Mr. Hellgren (Sweden): Mr. President, first of all, let me say that my delegation also fully aligns itself with the statement on behalf of the European Union read out by the representative of Spain, which included the main elements of our national position.

I was not planning to take the floor today, but the groundswell of constructive statements that we have heard today has inspired me to add the voice of my delegation in the same sense, though I might not be able to express it as eloquently as some other colleagues. I am thinking particularly of the distinguished German Ambassador, who said much of what I would have wanted to say.

First of all, I would like to express appreciation to you for your efforts to achieve consensus on a programme of work. It is no secret that my country, Sweden, very much favours transparency and accountability in all diplomatic processes and, in that context, I want to thank you for giving us this opportunity today to have these open consultations on the 2010 programme of work. I also fully share your analysis that in order to have a very constructive discussion — and I think the debate today proves that — we needed to have a concrete proposal on the table, as a basis for our collective efforts to move from “almost consensus” to a decision on a programme of work for 2010.

In that context, on the issue of consensus, I just want to add my voice to those who have given an interpretation of the responsibilities of membership of the Conference on Disarmament as to the application of the rule of consensus; we share the way that that is interpreted by many — in particular, the representative of Mexico put it very well today. We see membership of the Conference on Disarmament as something that gives us certain rights, but mainly it gives us responsibilities for international collective security and to work constructively in that sense, and that is how we apply the rights that rule 18 of the rules of procedure confers upon us.

I also want to express our support for the views expressed by you and so many others, that CD/WP.559 is — and I think the representative of the Group of Eastern European States put it very well — a realistic compromise. What I add from our perspective is that it takes into account the legitimate security concerns of all member States, but mainly it is a practical tool that enables the substantive work of the Conference on Disarmament to start, no more, no less. It is not a grand bargain in international security, but a practical tool to enable us to start substantive work. It is an enabling document. It is

not an exclusive, excluding document. It does not close any doors for more ambitious approaches to the work of the Conference in the future, but it is a practical tool that would allow us to at least start real work this year.

We have heard a few voices that are still asking for improvements in this document before we move to a decision. I could also propose improvements, but I have searched, at least my soul and our collective thinking, and, for the moment, see none that I could propose that would bring us closer to consensus. But like any other delegation here, we are ready to listen to proposals that would improve on CD/WP.559, on the assumption that they are made in good faith and that they bring us closer to consensus.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the distinguished representative of Sweden for his statement and his support for the document, as well as his view of the future work of the Conference and his proposals.

I should like now to give the floor to the distinguished representative of Italy. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. Manfredi (Italy): Mr. President, first of all, as this is the first time that I have addressed the Conference, may I congratulate you on assuming the presidency of the Conference and may I pledge our full support for your work.

Italy fully aligns itself, of course, with the statement of the Ambassador of Spain on behalf of the European Union. Italy is grateful for the careful consultations that you have conducted and that have allowed us to discuss CD/WP.559, our draft programme of work.

Italy considers CD/WP.559 already acceptable. It is comprehensive and balanced and it reflects the best possible compromise in the Conference on Disarmament, already reflected in last year's CD/1864, which we adopted unanimously through the efforts of our distinguished Algerian colleague.

We are ready of course to discuss CD/WP.559 further and in depth, but we would not wish to see its structure disrupted. CD/WP.559 provides for negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty under the Shannon mandate. Such a treaty is a key element in achieving nuclear disarmament, which a number of delegations have indicated as a top priority. So let us start negotiating this treaty in good faith, without prejudice to any aspect of this question and without claiming to be able already to predict the outcome.

Italy is ready to support you and the other P-6 presidents in this endeavour so as to achieve the early adoption of CD/WP.559.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the distinguished Ambassador of Italy for his statement and should like now to give the floor to the distinguished representative of the Republic of Korea. You have the floor.

Mr. Im Han-taek (Republic of Korea): Mr. President, I shall be brief. My delegation would like to express its sincere appreciation to you and the P-6 for your joint efforts in tabling CD/WP.559. My delegation considers the draft carefully balanced and all-embracing and the most viable and pragmatic option. Therefore, the Republic of Korea supports this proposal. We hope that this proposal will be accepted as the basis to work out consensus, to say the least. We look forward to its earliest adoption through discreet and constructive consultations among member States.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the distinguished Ambassador of the Republic of Korea for his statement and his support for the work of the President and his support for the document.

I should like now to give the floor to the distinguished representative of Hungary. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. Székely (Hungary): Mr. President, this is the first time I have taken the floor in the plenary and, as I understand, it is also the last time that I will have the opportunity to congratulate you on your work. I would also like to congratulate previous P-6 presidents for their tireless efforts to get the Conference on Disarmament back to work. I would like to emphasize that we much appreciate the leadership and the pragmatism of your approach, which has now enabled us here to have a document on the table. I would also like to associate my delegation with the statement made on behalf of the European Union by the distinguished Ambassador of Spain.

I have here a longer statement with some history and some arguments, but my situation has been very much eased by the wise thoughts and assessments of the experienced and wise ambassadors who have spoken before me. First of all, I would very much like to associate myself with the rational arguments made here by the distinguished Ambassador of Germany. So I will make my statement rather short.

First of all, it is important to say that we are not ready to give up the hope of again having the Conference on Disarmament work on substance. This is why we warmly welcome the submission of the draft programme of work contained in CD/WP.559. We see this draft document as a comprehensive and balanced text, the best possible compromise, just like its predecessor, CD/1864, and we think it accurately reflects the views of quite a large majority of this body, as we all have been able to hear from statements.

We think that we are at a critical juncture, and we should not waste this opportunity to build a new consensus, based on dialogue and, above all, on contributions in good faith. In our opinion this draft is a good basis for deliberations and we are ready to hear all opinions and suggestions, especially those which will take us closer to much-needed consensus.

So we would appeal to all delegations to make every effort to achieve this consensus and to make concrete proposals to facilitate the early commencement of our substantive discussions. I would particularly like to emphasize the words of the Ambassador of Brazil, who has talked about the culture of the Conference on Disarmament. I think this is very important. It is an asset. We should not waste it and we should therefore act responsibly, in order to maintain the credibility of this body.

In conclusion, I would like to assure you, Mr. President, and also the incoming CD presidencies, that our delegation stands ready to engage actively in our joint endeavours.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I should like to thank the distinguished representative of Hungary for his statement, and his kind words in support of the P-6 presidents and the document, and his readiness to cooperate with the presidency.

I should like now to give the floor to the distinguished representative of China, Mr. Wang. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. Wang Qun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): As you assume your duties, the Chinese delegation welcomes you and expresses its admiration for your efforts and contributions towards moving the work of the Conference forward during your term. Your rich experience has deeply impressed us.

We have carefully listened to your introduction of working paper CD/WP.559 circulated on 9 March. We have also listened in detail to the observations and ideas of many States members of the Conference for some time past, including today, regarding this working paper. Our overall view is the same as that already expressed by many delegations, including those of the Russian Federation, the United States and Germany, in that differences of opinion persist regarding this document.

The distinguished Ambassador of India has just emphasized the importance of taking into account the concerns of all the members and of working toward consensus. The distinguished Ambassador of Switzerland has just emphasized the importance of fair and transparent consultations. China supports these proposals, which we believe will be helpful in resolving and bridging our current differences. We hope that those involved will take account of each other's concerns and continue to bridge the gaps between their positions through broad and transparent consultation on a basis of equality, so as to complete as soon as possible a programme of work acceptable to all and to proceed to substantive work on the agenda of the Conference. China stands ready to work together with everyone to achieve these aims.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I should like to thank distinguished Ambassador Wang for his statement and his delegation's readiness to cooperate further with the President and within the Conference, and for his position on the need for further work on the document before us, which I fully share; I understand that this is also the view of other delegations.

I should like now to give the floor to the distinguished representative of South Africa. You have the floor.

Mr. Combrink (South Africa): Mr. President, for the past decade and more, the Conference on Disarmament has remained bogged down on procedural issues, which has made it impossible for the Conference to fulfil its primary responsibility as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. This unacceptable state of affairs may require us to reflect critically on our approach to a programme of work. We note that the proposals made during the course of the last decade are focused on devising a negotiating mandate on one or more of the core issues on our agenda.

The question is whether such a discussion on a negotiation or other kind of mandate to deal with the issues on our agenda is really needed. The fact is that the Conference has a negotiating mandate, and that any issue on its agenda is open for negotiation, as is also reflected in the draft decision that you have circulated in CD/WP.559.

Negotiation does not necessarily mean the conclusion of a legally-binding instrument. It could very well be that the outcome of any negotiation is the conclusion of a legally-binding arrangement, and that that is neither possible nor feasible. But it is our duty to explore such possibilities through negotiations. We therefore share the views expressed here, particularly by the Ambassador of Brazil but also by others, and remain ready to engage with all delegations to find a solution that would allow us to get down to substantive work.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the distinguished representative of South Africa for his statement and should like to give the floor to the distinguished representative of the Syrian Arab Republic. Syria, you have the floor.

Mr. Al-Nuqari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Mr. President, I would like to offer my thanks to you and your staff for the considerable efforts that you have made. We are confident of your clear desire to advance our work.

Mr. President, my country's delegation wishes to urge you to make further efforts, in cooperation and coordination with the P-6 and the other groups in the Conference, in order to arrive at a satisfactory programme of work that is accepted by all and that we all agree responds to the preoccupations, concerns and demands of all States.

My country's delegation also wishes to recall the important statement made by the Group of 21 on 2 February this year and the important elements that it contained, which we consider reflect the full extent of our concerns. We urge you and future presidencies to give due consideration to the substance of this statement. My country's delegation will spare no

effort to cooperate with you and with future presidencies in order to arrive at a programme of work that is agreed by all.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic for his statement and his willingness to undertake further work in a spirit of cooperation and transparency.

Now I should like to give the floor to the distinguished representative of Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka, you have the floor.

Mr. Jauhar (Sri Lanka): Mr. President, Sri Lanka attaches great importance to disarmament, including nuclear disarmament, as we all desire a world free of nuclear weapons. The Sri Lankan delegation wishes the Conference on Disarmament, the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, to move forward and fulfil its purpose while taking into consideration the concerns of all its members. Sri Lanka notes that the President of the Conference, as per the provisions of rule 29 of the rules of procedure, has drawn up a draft programme of work and has presented it to the Conference for consideration and adoption.

My delegation wishes to recall that the Group of 21, which comprises a significant number of Conference members, made a statement prior to the submission of the draft programme of work indicating the Group's position on the issue of nuclear disarmament, which enjoyed the consensus of the Group's members. Sri Lanka is of the view that cognizance should be taken of the Group's position, which should be accurately reflected in the programme of work.

The Sri Lankan delegation encourages the continuation of efforts to reach consensus on a programme of work through consultations.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the distinguished representative of Sri Lanka for his statement and I should like to give the floor to the distinguished representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. You have the floor.

Mr. Ri Jang Gon (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Mr. President, let me express our preliminary remarks regarding the draft. Like others, my delegation underlines the statement made on behalf of the Group of 21 on 2 February, highlighting the achievement of total nuclear disarmament as remaining the long-standing commitment and priority of the Group. This has been the consistent stance of my Government as well.

My delegation is of the view that any Conference on Disarmament document, whether it is official or unofficial, should reflect this point, and the supreme security of every member State should be duly reflected and certainly be reflected in any Conference on Disarmament activities.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for his statement and give the floor to the distinguished representative of Egypt. Egypt, you have the floor.

Mr. Badr (Egypt): Mr. President, Egypt welcomes all constructive efforts aimed at achieving consensus and commencing substantive negotiations within the Conference on Disarmament, the world's sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, and therefore supported CD/1864 as a programme of work for the 2009 session.

Egypt, as President of the Non-Aligned Movement, which counts amongst its membership 135 member and observer States, reiterates the call made by the Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement at the Sharm El Sheikh summit, which was echoed as a common position in the opening statement at the 2010 session of the Conference on Disarmament by the Group of 21, the largest grouping within the Conference, and which "reaffirmed the importance of the Conference on Disarmament as

the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament and [...] reiterated [the] call on the Conference to agree on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work by, inter alia, establishing an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament as soon as possible and as the highest priority". They emphasized "the necessity to start negotiations on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, with a specified framework of time, including a nuclear weapons convention". They reaffirmed "the importance of the unanimous conclusion of the [International Court of Justice] that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and to bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control".

In that regard, it is important to note that, for Egypt, negotiations on a realistic and viable treaty on fissile materials must include existing stocks. Any efforts to oppose such an approach may in fact be construed as contrary to agreed nuclear disarmament objectives. A treaty on fissile materials needs to advance both non-proliferation and disarmament objectives for it to be balanced and non-discriminatory, and this would be achieved only through the inclusion of stocks.

To that end, Egypt would like to see language reflecting this position in the document circulated.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the distinguished representative of Egypt for his statement and give the floor to the distinguished representative of Indonesia. You have the floor, Indonesia.

Mr. Djani (Indonesia): Mr. President, as this is the first time that I have taken the floor under your wise and able presidency, permit me also to express our appreciation for the efforts that you and your colleagues in the P-6 have undertaken in trying to forge consensus and to find a solution.

We would like to thank you for the proposal in CD/WP.559. We think that your proposal is a good basis for us to continue consultations on achieving a programme of work. In our understanding and our expectation, what needs to be done in the future is to ensure a balance in our discussion of the four core issues, so as to achieve our main quest of achieving a world safe from nuclear weapons.

As a member of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 21, Indonesia has always considered nuclear disarmament its main priority, and would like to see efforts undertaken in this regard. Moreover, we attach great importance to the issue of negative security assurances and we would also like to see substantive work in this area. We are also cognizant of the importance of ensuring that work is undertaken on the fissile material treaty that includes a verification programme and the issue of stockpiling, so as to ensure that we not only address the issue of proliferation, but also disarmament.

Like others, I welcome previous statements by many speakers, including the Ambassador of Germany, that what we have done in this chamber is sometimes not clear to the wider public, and my delegation sees the importance of opening the Conference on Disarmament to more public engagement and scrutiny. We welcome the decision by the Conference on Disarmament to hear the representative of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom last week, as a first step. We feel that we should continue this excellent practice of inviting civil society to be more engaged. More transparency should be the norm and not the exception.

Finally, I would like once again to stress my delegation's full support for you, Mr. President, in our readiness to continue consultations on this document provided by you, and would like to appeal to all in this room for more flexibility and good faith so that we can move forward, and also to recall that all of us are under the microscopic eye of the international community.

It is quite a pity, and indeed shameful, that three months after the beginning of the year, we are not able even to agree on a programme of work that is satisfactory to all members.

Although we represent national Governments, I would also like to underline and remind colleagues that we, as members of the Conference on Disarmament, also represent the international community and human beings at large who are concerned at the threat of nuclear weapons.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the distinguished Ambassador of Indonesia for his statement and his support for document CD/WP.559 as a basis for further discussions.

I should like now to give the floor to the distinguished representative of Colombia. Colombia, you have the floor.

Mr. Ávila Camacho (Colombia): Thank you very much, Mr. President. Colombia welcomes the submission of document CD/WP.559 as a draft programme of work we could agree on for 2010. Colombia thinks that your proposal succeeds in bringing together important elements and constitutes a solid basis on which to start our work as soon as possible, thus avoiding falling once more into a cycle of many years of stagnation, as has happened in the past. As we have said at plenary and informal meetings of this forum, the document is far from perfect. We have said that we would also like to see such topics as negative security assurances, the prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS) and nuclear disarmament reflected in it. On the other hand, it does reflect a topic that Colombia supports: initiating negotiations on a fissile materials treaty which would, of course, include the principles of disarmament and non-proliferation.

Mr. President, Colombia recognizes and appreciates all the consultations you, the representative of Bangladesh and the other presidents have carried out, demonstrating coherence, consistency and continuity – precisely the qualities the system of six Presidents must possess.

Mr. President, we are aware that the document you presented has not achieved consensus; nonetheless, you and future presidents have our full backing and support in your efforts to adopt a programme of work soon.

Finally, we are pleased that — as various delegations have already mentioned — the principles of transparency, inclusion and broad participation by all continue to be applied in this crucial process.

Although we must focus our efforts on the important task of adopting the programme for 2010, it is equally important, Mr. President, to recall that there have been other issues on the agenda this year, such as the participation of civil society — on which topic we have heard the proposals of some ambassadors and delegations — and membership of the Conference on Disarmament.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Colombia for his statement and give the floor to the distinguished representative of Pakistan, Ambassador Akram. Sir, you have the floor.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): Mr. President, during our last plenary meeting, my delegation expressed its views with regard to the working paper distributed by you at the last plenary, and in that statement we conveyed the areas or reasons for our reservations on this working paper. Notwithstanding this position, I would like to take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation to you and to your colleagues for the hard work and dedication with which you consulted with us and with all the other delegations and the hard work with which you have produced this document for our consideration. I would also like

to take this opportunity to express my appreciation for the kind remarks made by the Ambassador of Germany, whom I shall certainly call and thank for appreciating the professionalism, if not the conclusions, of the statement that I made on 18 February. I would like to make a few remarks regarding some of the issues that have been raised today.

First of all, I would like to respond to the arguments that have been made by some delegations that negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty are now “ripe” for us to start the negotiations. I have not heard any reasons given for this ripeness, so I can only draw my own conclusions on why some delegations feel that such negotiations are ripe. My conclusion is that such a treaty, which only calls for a cut-off of future production of fissile material is, or will be, cost-free for the nuclear-weapon States that have assembled a huge arsenal of nuclear weapons and really do not need to add to that arsenal any more. They have thousands of weapons between them and, because of that, they really do not require any more fissile material, and therefore, this treaty is ripe for them.

It is in a way the same situation that happened with the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty: because they had conducted so many hundreds, if not thousands, of nuclear tests that they did not need to test any more, therefore the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty was ripe and it was concluded.

This amounts to making a virtue of necessity, and that is why, in our view, a fissile material cut-off treaty is ripe.

I would also like to refer to the number of comments that have been made by my colleagues with regard to the issue of stockpiles of fissile material. I align myself wholeheartedly with those delegations that have called for the reduction of stockpiles as a means towards converting a fissile material treaty into a disarmament treaty.

The issue for us is stockpiles, and when we are told that the issue of stockpiles will be addressed, can be addressed, during the negotiations, then why not accept it up front and say, “Yes, we are ready to negotiate a treaty that will reduce fissile material stockpiles”? If we are ready to do this, I do not see why we cannot say it up front so that we can start off on this process.

We have also heard a number of delegations highlighting the issue of negotiations on nuclear disarmament, negative security assurances and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. These are issues very close to the interests of the Group of 21, which is incidentally the largest group of countries in the Conference on Disarmament. In this context, the then Coordinator of the G-21 read out a statement in the Conference on Disarmament conveying the Group’s preference for initiating negotiations on nuclear disarmament. I regret that this view or this position of the G-21 has not been reflected in your working paper, nor is it an issue which, I regret to say, commands consensus in this room.

This is surprising for us, because the high and mighty, the powerful of this world, have themselves acknowledged an agenda for nuclear disarmament. However, it is difficult for them to agree to initiating those negotiations on nuclear disarmament in this forum, the very forum whose *raison d’être* is nuclear disarmament. You would forgive me for my cynicism in accepting the kind of arguments that are being made outside this room in favour of nuclear disarmament. If those commitments are true, then we should have no hesitancy in initiating negotiations on nuclear disarmament in the Conference on Disarmament either.

I would also like to refer to what has been called a responsibility to respect international opinion or the world community’s views. We are in favour of that, but the world community’s views, as far as I am aware, are more — in fact, almost unanimously — in favour of nuclear disarmament. If we were to take a straw poll outside this room, you

would find that the majority of the people in the world will endorse negotiations in this Conference on nuclear disarmament, rather than on a fissile material cut-off treaty, which remains very much an esoteric view for many people, and for many people it is even something they do not understand.

Therefore, let us, if we are really responding to the international community's views, respond directly to the objective which is uppermost on the agenda of the international community, that is, nuclear disarmament.

A lot has been said about article 27 of the rules of procedure, according to which, it is repeatedly argued, we must take into account the recommendations of the General Assembly. Yes, we should, but we should not be selective in doing so. The General Assembly has recommended not only that we negotiate a fissile material cut-off treaty, but also a treaty on nuclear disarmament, a treaty on negative security assurances and a treaty on preventing an arms race in outer space. Why must we ignore these recommendations or resolutions of the General Assembly and take up only that recommendation which some delegations are ready to adopt?

Lastly, I want to say something about the issue of consensus. The rules of procedure, in rule 18, state that the Conference shall conduct its work and adopt its decisions by consensus, so we are bound to conduct our work and to take decisions on the basis of consensus. I know that English is not my mother tongue, but I know enough English to know the difference between consensus and unanimity. I also have enough knowledge of the history of this body to know that consensus has been a central element of the work that we do here, and I would like to remind those who were not here in the days when the rules of procedure were being written, that it was the major powers who insisted that the rules of consensus — the requirement for consensus — should apply to both substantive and procedural work. This remains true today.

We cannot play loose with the idea of consensus. Consensus is the right of every delegation in this room, in the Conference on Disarmament, and we intend to use this right in the interest of Pakistan.

Lastly, let me assure you and your successors that while we have differences with this document, we still remain ready to engage with you and with your successors to evolve a programme of work on the basis of consensus.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the distinguished Ambassador of Pakistan, Mr. Akram, for his important statement, as clear, open and professional as always.

Now I should like to give the floor to the distinguished representative of Turkey.

Mr. Öskiper (Turkey): Mr. President, allow me at the outset to express our appreciation to you for your efforts as well as those of the former President and the P-6. Turkey wishes to see progress in the Conference on Disarmament at the earliest. Therefore, we believe that the draft you circulated on 9 March forms a good basis for deliberations. Although it is not included explicitly, we assume that the issue of stocks will be dealt with accordingly, based on the Shannon mandate.

I wish to reiterate Turkey's hope to see the process moving. To this end, you can count on the support of the Turkish delegation in your endeavours.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the distinguished representative of Turkey for his support and his willingness to engage in further work and cooperation, and I give the floor to the distinguished representative of Australia. Australia, you have the floor.

Mr. Kimpton (Australia): Mr. President, the Australian delegation appreciates your efforts, like others, to consult broadly and for your initiative in preparing and tabling CD/WP.559.

We take note of your comments that the working paper reflects the strongest level of support amongst the members of the Conference and reflects the best option for moving forward. To us, its strengths lie in its flexibility. It allows broad-based discussions in negotiations on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament. It makes absolutely clear that it is without prejudice to any past, present or future position, proposal or priority of any delegation, and that it does not preclude any outcomes. It is also very balanced and comprehensive in nature. Naturally, to us the programme of work will never reflect exactly all our interests and priorities. It is by necessity a complex and evolving compromise reflecting a broad range of views.

The Australian delegation has listened and certainly will continue to listen to all delegations on their views on the best way forward for the Conference on Disarmament. We support the document you have circulated, but are of course open to considering amendments and proposals to it, which may bring us closer to consensus. Like others, we also support the draft's blending of the elements of the programme of work and its implementation, which we consider a useful initiative in giving clarity on our forward programme.

We look forward to working with you and the P-6 to reach a successful resolution on our programme of work.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the distinguished representative of Australia for his statement and his support for the President and the P-6, and for his willingness to agree to further work on the document submitted by the President.

I should like now to give the floor to the distinguished representative of Malaysia. Malaysia, you have the floor.

Mr. Azril (Malaysia): Mr. President, since this is the first time my delegation has taken the floor during this session, allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. Through you we would like to express our appreciation for the work conducted by your predecessor, the Ambassador of Bangladesh.

Malaysia's position on the Conference on Disarmament is well known; for those who do not know, it suffices to reiterate that nuclear disarmament remains our highest priority. We appreciate the draft decision tabled before us. We believe it is the outcome of long, transparent and inclusive consultations, which we highly commend. Malaysia welcomes and supports the draft decision submitted by you, as it contains elements of last year's programme for which we expressed support. We find CD/WP.559 a basis on which to continue consultations. We remain committed to work with you, your P-6 colleagues and other delegates in seeking the elusive consensus. We acknowledge and we must say that it may not be perfect, but then again, after a decade of deadlock, we are not in search of perfection.

On the issue of a fissile material cut-off treaty, we may say that the issue of stocks is in our interests.

We understand that this paper does not yet enjoy consensus. We hope that interested delegations will answer your calls to submit proposals, amendments or language to further improve the draft and help move our work forward. For our interest is to seek solutions to allow the Conference on Disarmament to resume its role and not to remain paralysed.

May I also take this opportunity to echo previous calls in formal plenaries that the Conference on Disarmament broaden its engagement with civil society. Malaysia has always supported such efforts, as we view civil society's work outside this Conference and from the gallery above as constructive and supportive of our work and overall agenda.

Lastly, may I assure you again of my delegation's full support to you and the other 2010 P-6 colleagues in the work ahead.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the distinguished representative of Malaysia for his statement and his support for the work of the President and the P-6, and his willingness to continue work on the document.

I should now like to give the floor, as I am being prompted, to the distinguished representative of Viet Nam. Viet Nam, you have the floor.

Mr. Tran Chi Thanh (Viet Nam) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, this is the first time I have taken the floor under your presidency. I should like to thank you and congratulate you on the way that you have guided the Conference on Disarmament and for your efforts in drawing up working document CD/WP.599, which provides a useful basis for real discussions on the work of the Conference. You can count on our delegation's support and constructive cooperation.

We have heard expressions of support for document CD/WP.599 in this hall today, but also expressions of concern or even unease.

It is clear that the document was drawn up with great care on the basis of document CD/1864, which we adopted by consensus last year.

This gives rise to an important question: what has changed since 29 May 2009? We need to determine that so that we can, if possible, encourage consensus within the Conference. We have also heard the viewpoints of many member countries on the Conference's priorities: the treaty banning the production of fissile material, assurances to countries that do not have nuclear weapons, and the prevention of an arms race in space.

Each of us has our own reasons and, I believe, this sole multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiating forum should take all these proposals into consideration, bringing views together as much as possible so that we can begin our substantive work.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I should like to thank the distinguished representative of Viet Nam for his statement and his willingness to continue work on document CD/WP.599.

I should like now to give the floor to the distinguished representative of Japan. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. Suda (Japan): Mr. President, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to you for officially submitting the very important working paper CD/WP.559.

This working paper is based on the basic concept of CD/1864, which was agreed to by consensus last year, identifying four core issues and three other issues respectively, with appropriate mandates.

States members of the Conference have reached this basic formula after many years of deliberations. Therefore, Japan joins most other delegations in supporting the approach the President has taken, as it builds upon what has been discussed and achieved in this chamber. My delegation believes that this working paper is a balanced and comprehensive proposal. As such, it should serve as an effective basis for our discussions hereafter on a programme of work for the 2010 session of the Conference on Disarmament.

Japan has been standing firm for many years in its call for the total elimination of nuclear weapons, which is, I believe, the goal of all delegations present here. It is also a widely shared conviction that the total elimination of nuclear weapons cannot be achieved overnight with a single piece of paper or a declaration. It requires a cumulative process of practical steps and effective disarmament measures. In this context, it is quite obvious, as the preamble of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons clearly indicates,

that the first step we have to make is the cessation of the manufacture of nuclear weapons. To this end, quality-capping by comprehensively banning nuclear testing and quantity-capping by banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons are both indispensable. A fissile material cut-off treaty is thus by its own nature the next logical, practical nuclear disarmament step. Such a treaty is the indispensable and practical step ahead of us towards nuclear disarmament.

No State — particularly responsible members of the Conference on Disarmament and States possessing nuclear weapons — which supports nuclear disarmament and joins the global effort to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons can deny the importance of a swift start to negotiations on such an important treaty as a fissile material cut-off treaty, without prejudice to the positions of any negotiating State.

As to the content of the negotiations, my delegation believes that we will have to make every effort to maximize the extent of the disarmament aspect of a fissile material cut-off treaty by serious deliberations during the negotiations on the issue of stocks, as is already clearly set out in the Shannon report (CD/1299). However, I hasten to add that this does not justify any arguments demanding guarantees of particular results of future negotiations as conditions for their commencement.

Moreover, the issue of a fissile material cut-off treaty has reached a level of sufficient maturity for us to embark on formal negotiations. In fact, this was the conclusion all States members of the Conference reached after focused and thematic debates on all the agenda items from 2006 to 2009. During those years, the positions of many delegations were revealed to the extent possible, and we reached the point where delegations struggled to say anything more specific or anything different without entering actual negotiations. This, coupled with the heightened global expectations of nuclear disarmament, led to last year's historic consensus decision on CD/1864, which included the commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty.

At the same time, member States recognized the importance of the other three core issues, namely nuclear disarmament, negative security assurances and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. These are all very important subjects and, for practical reasons, we agreed to discuss them with the possibility of future negotiations. We also recognized the necessity to maintain the other three issues to allow delegations to address any other issues relevant to the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

All this clearly shows that the current working paper is a balanced and constructive proposal that takes into account the achievements of States members of the Conference on Disarmament over the course of many years. We cannot just simply discard our accomplishments; we have to build upon them. This is why my delegation is of the view that the President's working paper is a very good basis for our consideration of a programme of work for 2010, and Japan can support the working paper.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I should like to thank the distinguished Ambassador of Japan for his statement, his support for the document and his readiness to cooperate with the P-6.

I should like now to give the floor to the distinguished representative of Austria. Austria, you have the floor.

Ms. Karner (Austria): Mr. President, like others, Austria believes that your working paper represents a carefully drafted compromise and a good basis for future work. We support your draft and stand ready to engage in discussions with partners on a programme of work, with a view to a swift resumption of substantive work.

We would like to thank you, Mr. President, for your efforts and assure you as well as your P-6 colleagues of Austria's full support.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Austria for her statement and her support for the work of the P-6 and the document.

We have come to the end of the list of speakers and I see no one else who wishes to take the floor, so I should like to make a few comments. They boil down to the following and are not so much comments as remarks.

As President I am, of course, pleased with the discussion we have had, which I believe has been extremely important. It is important that our discussion today has taken place in a spirit of openness and without confrontation; it has been a comprehensive discussion that will allow us — and I mean first and foremost the P-6 Presidents — to make use of what has been said in our further work on document CD/WP.559.

I have also come to the understanding, that the Conference is prepared to see CD/WP.599 as a document for further work. Of course, we can only achieve the expected results and help the Conference make progress in dealing with the tasks before it if we have the political will. However skilful our Presidents, however much the regional group coordinators try, however remarkable our statements to the Conference, we cannot move forward if we do not show the political will and the necessary spirit of compromise. And the issues we are talking about are not only subjects of discussion for the Conference; we are talking about matters that concern the very life of humanity, that are too serious to allow us to spend 14 years on end arguing about the agenda and the programme of work.

I am always extremely pleased to listen to the contributions of the distinguished Ambassador of Germany and I agree with him that we are beginning to look to history more frequently, back to the times when the Conference addressed issues, when everyone understood that the peace and security of humankind really did depend on its work. Unfortunately, there are situations when there is nothing to report to the world at large, nothing to say about the work of the Conference. Nevertheless, both as President and in my national role, I am by nature an optimist and I think that we will be capable of taking advantage of the conditions that are beginning to form to find a solution to the main issues before the Conference.

Now I should like to turn to what I am sure is the most important part of my presidency today. Perhaps the Ambassador of Belgium would like to take the floor?

I should like afterwards to thank the Conference and conclude my work, so, if the Ambassador is ready, perhaps we could listen to him; it is therefore with pleasure that I give the floor to the distinguished Ambassador of Belgium.

Mr. Van Meeuwen (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I should like first of all to thank most warmly those who have gone before me as President of this assembly this year, firstly yourself, dear colleague, but also Ambassador Hannan and your teams who have all worked towards the same objectives, defining a programme of work capable of getting the Conference back to effective work.

From next week, it will be our turn to pick up the baton and complete this task, taking account of what you have said and of the outcome of our predecessors' repeated endeavours. Belgium will spare no effort in this, and I should like to thank the very many delegations who have assured us of their support.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the distinguished Ambassador of Belgium for his statement and, before wishing him success during his term as President, I should like to thank you all for your constructive cooperation during my presidency. I thank the other Presidents of the Conference on Disarmament this year for their invaluable support over this difficult period and for their effective collaboration in the P-6, which was very important to my work.

I also express my thanks to Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, our Director-General, for his professionalism, and his team for their extremely professional approach. The expert knowledge of the secretariat representatives and their assistance on all the issues that arose were invaluable in the proper exercise of my functions.

I thank, of course, the conference support services for the conscientious way in which they have carried out their duties, and I sincerely thank the interpreters for their professional work, thanks to which we have been able to understand one another.

As President, and in my national capacity, I sincerely thank the distinguished Ambassador of Pakistan, Mr. Zamir Akram, for his openness, his high level of professionalism, and his readiness to present his position in detail. I think that such an approach is very important for the Conference so that, hiding nothing but our most awful secrets, we can continue to work and take decisions on the issues that the Conference has to decide on.

The next formal plenary meeting of the Conference will take place in this hall under the Belgian presidency, on a date to be announced by the secretariat. I sincerely wish Belgium and the distinguished Ambassador of Belgium success in achieving solutions to the issues discussed today, including on progress in the discussion on document CD/WP.599. Thank you all, once again, for your cooperation and spirit of compromise.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.