
Conference on Disarmament

29 May 2009

English

Final record of the one thousand one hundred and thirty-ninth plenary meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Friday, 29 May 2009, at 10.30 a.m.

President: Mr. Idriss Jazaïry (Algeria)

The President (*spoke in French*): I declare open the 1139th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. I have on my list of speakers the Ambassador of Ukraine, Mr. Mykola Maimeskul, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Maimeskul (Ukraine): Mr. President, today, during the last plenary meeting under your presidency, let me start by expressing my delegation's sincere congratulations and gratitude for your tremendous efforts, professionalism and wisdom in moving the Conference on Disarmament forward. I would also like to commend your P-6 colleagues, whose ongoing productive cooperation is yet another proof of the value of the P-6 platform and cross-regional political will for a peaceful and secure future.

During the meeting of our regional group with the P-6 several days ago, the delegation of Ukraine expressed its strong welcome and support for the draft decision submitted by the P-6 on the establishment of a programme of work, as contained in document CD/1863. We see this document as an integrated outcome of thousands of hours of consultations and a considerable number of years of consensus-building activity by all members of the Conference. Last year my country had the privilege of being involved in these activities as one of the co-authors and promoters of CD/1840, which, enriched by the most viable proposals, evolved into CD/1863. Ukraine shares the priorities of CD/1863 and considers it to be not only a logical step in the right direction, but a fresh and powerful impulse to the momentum created in order to reach consensus on the programme of work.

Recent developments in the sphere of international security have indicated that the proliferation of nuclear technologies in the world, along with the imperfections of the current system of legal regulation in the sphere of fissile materials production, creates real threats of a regional and global nature. In our view, a legally-binding and verifiable international treaty on fissile materials will significantly strengthen the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), and should be the first priority of the Conference on Disarmament. Ukraine believes that the modifications made in CD/1863 reflect this idea and pave the way for the commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). We also welcome the creation of working groups on other important items on the Conference's agenda, in particular, on the issue of negative security assurances, which is of substantial interest to Ukraine after its voluntary abandonment of the world's third largest nuclear arsenal 13 years ago in 1996.

This year we have a unique opportunity to add another page of compromise and flexibility to the history of international disarmament. Alongside positive signals from the recent meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 NPT Review Conference and the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) negotiations between the United States of America and the Russian Federation, the adoption of the programme of work on the basis of CD/1863 may mark an important step forward in the disarmament agenda. Thus, we urge all members of the Conference to support this document.

The President: I thank the distinguished Ambassador of Ukraine and now give the floor to the distinguished Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Moaiyeri (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. President, since this is the first time I have taken the floor under your presidency, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the post of President of the Conference on Disarmament. I also extend my thanks and appreciation to your predecessors for their efforts as presidents of the Conference earlier this year.

Algeria's presidency of the Conference on Disarmament has been marked by many great achievements for the Conference. The presence of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the foreign minister of Algeria and the head of the Department for Foreign Affairs of Switzerland at the plenary of the Conference on 19 May 2009, and their valuable

remarks, together with your efforts to establish a programme of work for the Conference, are among the achievements that deserve to be highly regarded. Your efforts are a clear example of what foreign minister Mourad Medelci, on 17 March 2009, called Algeria's commitment to multilateralism to maintain international peace and security. Your tireless efforts and your openness to consult with and hear the views of members of the Conference enjoy the full recognition of members.

On many occasions in this Conference, I have expressed the position of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the importance of the Conference, as well as our priority for its work, a matter that has been subject to serious consideration in recent years. We have always requested the adoption of a balanced and comprehensive programme of work. I would like to inform you that we have forwarded the draft decision for the establishment of a programme of work for the 2009 session of the Conference contained in document CD/1863 to our capital for consideration. Until now, I have not received instructions in support of the draft decision.

The President: I thank the distinguished Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran and give the floor to the distinguished representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Mr. An Myong Hun (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Mr. President, on instructions from my capital, my delegation would like to make the following statement: the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and its people desire peace and stability on the Korean peninsula more than any other country, because this is the land where our people live and create their livelihood. Likewise, our country treasures its sovereign rights and rights to economic development, particularly in the face of continuing hostile policies and sanctions imposed by some countries against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

In order to defend its people and its territory and ensure unhindered economic development under sanctions, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea even has to possess nuclear weapons as a means of deterrence and for maintaining the development environment. This is only and purely for national defence. As long as pressure and sanctions are forced upon us, we will continue to strengthen our national deterrents.

The nature of the statements made by the representatives of, respectively, Japan and the Republic of Korea on 26 May in this chamber can only have a negative impact on the development of the situation on the Korean peninsula and the timely consideration of draft decision CD/1863. Nevertheless, it is our policy to achieve total and complete nuclear disarmament, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea believes and holds that those countries with most of the nuclear weapons must take the lead in the elimination of nuclear weapons. In fact, nuclear threats and proliferation come from those weapons, particularly on a large status.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has followed closely the discussions on the draft decision and the changes in the atmosphere of the Conference on Disarmament. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has always been constructive in its approach to the work of the Conference, and has been fully cooperating with the G-21.

It is in this constructive spirit and from this constant position on the total elimination of nuclear weapons, first by those countries which possess most of the weapons, that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has decided to support draft decision CD/1863, in order to start substantial work without delay, even though a negative debate is still going on in another part of this forum, that is, in New York vis-à-vis the nuclear test carried out by my country.

I would like to take this opportunity to pay my delegation's special tribute and thanks to the President of the Conference, the Ambassador of Algeria, for the great effort,

persistence, able guidance and diplomatic skills with which he has guided the work of the Conference today. I also express my delegation's high appreciation to the ambassadors of Viet Nam and Zimbabwe for their excellent work during their presidencies and for their constructive bilateral approaches and discussions with my delegation.

The President: I thank you very much for your contribution. The distinguished Ambassador of Morocco has the floor.

Mr. Hilale (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, I should like first of all to offer you my sincere congratulations as you assume the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and to pay a tribute to your untiring efforts to extricate the Conference from the impasse it has reached with regard to its programme of work. I should also like to take this opportunity to thank and congratulate our colleague from Zimbabwe, who worked assiduously to move us forward in our efforts to adopt a programme of work.

Lastly, looking ahead to the future, or rather to next week, a final word to my long-standing colleague and friend, Ambassador and Secretary of State of Argentina, Mr. Roberto García Moritán, whom I am very happy to see here and who will be assuming the presidency of the Conference. I should like to congratulate him now, even if I will be able to do so again when he does assume that office, and to assure him of my full support and tell him how happy I am to see him here with us again.

My delegation would like to share its views on the draft decision contained in document CD/1863. The current international disarmament environment has been marked by the recent statements by nuclear Powers in favour of reducing their nuclear arsenals, particularly the historic statement by President Obama in Prague, which lays out a new strategy for disarmament, and the statement delivered here by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Mr. Lavrov. Mention should also be made of the Russian-American commitment to negotiate a new strategic missiles accord, the renewed Chinese-Russian effort on a treaty to prevent the militarization of outer space and the declared political will to undertake negotiations for a verifiable treaty banning the use of fissile material for military purposes. This opening up with regard to disarmament on the part of the great Powers was reinforced by the recent adoption at the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 NPT Review Conference of the agenda for the Conference.

It is against this background characterized by a positive momentum for disarmament that draft decision CD/1863 was submitted. Containing the programme of work for the Conference, this document, in our view, is out of sync with the new realities obtaining in the field of security and nuclear disarmament. Moreover, document CD/1863 does not reflect the position of principle of the Group of 21, which advocates a balanced programme of work for the Conference on Disarmament that would establish working groups with mandates to negotiate in four areas, namely nuclear disarmament; the fissile materials treaty; prevention of an arms race in outer space; and negative security guarantees. It merely provides for the establishment of a group to negotiate a verifiable treaty on fissile materials and working groups charged with holding in-depth discussions on other items on the Conference's agenda – in other words, exactly what the Conference has been doing for 14 years, completely overlooking its principal mandate not only as a forum for multilateral negotiations in the field of disarmament but as an autonomous negotiating body.

The news this week of the latest test conducted by North Korea and the challenge this poses to nuclear non-proliferation are the kind of developments that lead the international community to commit itself at once to serious negotiations in good faith on a nuclear disarmament treaty that would allow us to achieve the objective desired by all in a world free from nuclear weapons.

I should also like to inform the distinguished members of this forum that the presidency of the Conference sought to ignore my delegation in the consultation process. My delegation has in fact since last March expressed its desire to meet with the presidency for bilateral consultations regarding the proposed programme of work. Yet its requests went unheeded by the presidency, which claimed that its schedule was full. My delegation also declined a request to hold a consultation with the team of six Presidents (P-6) for the simple reason that the P-6 is an informal structure. What Morocco did want as a State member of the Conference on Disarmament was to be consulted by the presidency. Nevertheless, I should like to reiterate here my delegation's support for, recognition of and appreciation for the six Presidents, their efforts and the selflessness they have displayed so that we could finally adopt a programme of work.

Morocco, a staunch defender of the principles and foundations of multilateralism, has demanded equal treatment for all members of the Conference before taking a formal decision on the draft; this is ultimately what happened this morning. Accordingly, I should like to inform the Conference that my delegation has just held frank, substantive and fruitful bilateral consultations with the presidency. In the light of the foregoing, my delegation, cognizant of the need to grasp the historic opportunity now offered to the Conference on Disarmament to resume its rightful role as a multilateral negotiating forum in the field of disarmament and to take advantage of the favourable environment surrounding disarmament issues, wishes to respond as it has always done, with an awareness of its responsibilities and a realistic attitude. It has thus decided not to oppose the consensus and to allow the programme of work of the Conference on Disarmament to be adopted, and it wishes in this connection to thank all friendly delegations and capitals that have contacted Morocco on this matter.

The Kingdom of Morocco has consistently demonstrated constructive flexibility, a spirit of initiative and a commitment to multilateral diplomacy in which there is a place for everyone. It has always kept the causes of peace and international security, disarmament and mutual cooperation, and especially the sacrosanct principle of mutual respect, at the forefront of its priorities.

The President: Thank you. Would anyone else like to take the floor? If not, I will do so.

(The President continues in French)

On 17 March, when I assumed the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. Mourad Medelci, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Algeria, closed his statement by saying, "The ... presidency of the Conference will be objective and professional, and will be dedicated to promoting understanding among all member States and reconciling the interests and security concerns of one and all, with a view to reaching true consensus with real added value."

It is very much in that spirit and with a firm desire to make a modest contribution on behalf of my country towards meeting the challenge of overcoming the deadlock that has existed within the Conference for more than 12 years that I have undertaken to carry out the mandate you have entrusted to me. Conditions at the international level were particularly propitious for this, as you have noted in your statements. The statement made by Mr. Gordon Brown on 17 March, the joint statement issued by Presidents Obama and Medvedev and, before that, the European Union action plan introduced by the French presidency, to which must be added the ongoing and unconditional support of China for the achievement of a nuclear-weapon-free world recently announced by the Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs of China, Mr. Liu Jieyi, in Beijing have been among the many encouraging signs for relaunching the work of the Conference.

Inspired by this state of affairs, I joined my fellow Presidents from the 2009 session, without prejudice or any preconceived ideas, in a process of consultation involving all member States on every item on the agenda with a view to determining an appropriate framework that would allow the Conference to find its way among the remaining obstacles and thus fulfil its mandate.

At the conclusion of these consultations we came to the following conclusions: first of all, we must assume our historic responsibility not to let this opportunity to relaunch the work of the Conference slip away, or else we might deal it a fatal blow or, at best, relegate it to the sidelines once and for all. This is truly a situation in which we must move beyond our pre-established positions in order to be guided solely by the manifest commonality of our interests in this sphere. It also offers us a way to find a multilateral approach for settling global affairs rather than abdicate our responsibilities in favour of a self-appointed directorate. Secondly, our programme of work should be carried out in a comprehensive and balanced manner so that we can accommodate the concerns of all Conference members. Thirdly, the consensus we seek should be viewed in the context of pursuing and following up earlier efforts, avoiding the difficulties that prevented us from adopting the proposals put forward in recent years.

It was in the light of these consultations conducted collectively by the members of the P-6 that the presidency submitted an informal document on 26 March 2009 that contained the potential elements of a programme of work.

During the intersessional period we held consultations with a view to moving towards a consensus on this document. My country's diplomatic apparatus was mobilized to this end so that bilateral consultations could be conducted not only by the six Presidents who share the work here in Geneva but also by the diplomatic corps in Algiers and in all the capitals of member States with which we have diplomatic relations. They were held also in the context of the international conferences that have been held since we assumed the presidency.

Happily, our initiative enjoyed broad support. This led to expressions of support, which can be found in the statements delivered at the Ministerial Meeting of the Coordinating Bureau of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, held in April in Havana, at the Ministerial Conference of the Office of the Islamic Conference held recently in Damascus, and by all Arab ministers present at the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the NPT Review Conference.

Encouraged by the majority of member States, my fellow Presidents and I agreed to submit this document by the presidency as an official proposal on the part of the six Presidents for the 2009 session under the symbol CD/1863.

Of course, like any human undertaking, this document is not perfect; however, as many delegations have pointed out, it is a compromise built on a delicate balance between the various items on the agenda. It represents a synthesis of a number of initiatives taken within the Conference and intensified since 1999.

The differences in the terms of the mandates of the various issues in no way implies any prioritization or a minimizing of one issue versus another. From our point of view, every issue is of significance for international security. Rather, we have tried to lay the foundation of a compromise in order to stimulate negotiations, discussions and exchanges of views. Now it is up to us to engage in a process of constructive exchange that will allow the Conference to reassert its mandate as the sole multilateral forum for disarmament negotiations.

We are encouraged in our efforts by the fact that all delegations that have mentioned document CD/1863 have, with but a single exception, done so to express their support for it

or to say that they would not stand in the way of a consensus on it. I believe that there is no opposition from any member State on this point.

The adoption of a programme of work based on document CD/1863 is thus within our reach. Indeed, rule 18 of the Conference's rules of procedure stipulates that the Conference shall act on the basis of consensus. Allow me, then, solemnly to address the Conference now to ask if any delegation has any objection to the adoption of document CD/1863 by consensus.

I see no objection. The document is thus adopted.

(The President continues in English)

I would like to shake hands in particular with the members of the P-6, but they are not all on the rostrum. So, to all those who are not there, please accept the same expression of gratitude and affection that I have expressed to those on the podium.

I would like now to give the floor to the distinguished Ambassador of India, who has asked for the floor.

Mr. Rao (India): Mr. President, I have requested the floor after joining consensus on the draft decision for the establishment of a programme of work for the 2009 session contained in CD/1863, where we *inter alia* conveyed our willingness to conclude a universal, non-discriminatory and internationally verifiable treaty banning the future production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. I wish to place on record India's perspective on the programme of work just adopted and spell out the essential basis of India's concurrence for the commencement of negotiations on an FMCT.

India supports the establishment of a working group to negotiate an FMCT as part of the Conference's programme of work. India was one of the original co-sponsors of General Assembly resolution 48/75/L, adopted in 1993 on an FMCT, as it envisaged the treaty as a significant contribution to nuclear non-proliferation in all its aspects. The mandate for the proposed treaty was explicitly reflected in the 1993 resolution and reconfirmed by the Shannon report, contained in CD/1299, that is, to negotiate a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. The scope of such a treaty would focus on the future production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

We are committed to participating constructively in the work on an FMCT in the Conference on Disarmament. Our Prime Minister stated in Parliament on 13 August 2006 that India is willing to join only a non-discriminatory, multilaterally negotiated and internationally verifiable FMCT as and when it is concluded in the Conference on Disarmament, provided our security interests are fully addressed.

India is a nuclear-weapon State and a responsible member of the world community, and would approach these negotiations as such. We will not accept obligations not in keeping with or prejudicial to our national security interests or which hinder our strategy programme, our research and development or three-stage nuclear programme. The treaty should not place an undue burden on non-proscribed military activities.

India attaches the highest priority to the goal of nuclear disarmament. Speaking at the General Assembly of the United Nations on 26 September 2008, our Prime Minister reiterated India's proposal for a nuclear weapons convention banning the production, development, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons and providing for their complete elimination within a specified time frame. This is consistent with India's long-standing commitment as put forward in the Rajiv Gandhi Action Plan in 1988.

Nuclear weapons are an integral part of our national security and will remain so, pending the global elimination of all nuclear weapons on a universal, non-discriminatory basis. An FMCT would be a step towards this goal.

While joining the consensus on this programme of work, we wish to place on record our disappointment that the Conference would not decide on launching negotiations on nuclear disarmament. We feel that there is a heavy responsibility on the Conference on Disarmament as the single, multilateral disarmament negotiating forum to respond meaningfully to the growing international feeling in favour of nuclear disarmament. While India has gone along with the establishment of a working group to exchange views and information on practical steps for progressive and systematic efforts to reduce nuclear weapons with the ultimate goal of their elimination, we believe that the Conference on Disarmament should continue to actively explore all possible venues to advance its work for the actual commencement of negotiations on nuclear disarmament. CD/1863 does in fact include the possibility of future negotiations, and we believe that the Conference should take concrete steps in that direction.

The work of the Conference on Disarmament should be conducted according to its rules of procedure and on the basis of strict adherence to the rule that the Conference shall conduct its work and adopt decisions by consensus, in order to provide the necessary assurance that the security interests of member States will be fully protected.

We would like to conclude by placing on record our deep appreciation for your efforts and those undertaken by your predecessors to find common ground to enable the Conference on Disarmament to commence substantive work this year. We are hopeful that our common efforts will bear substantive fruit in the years ahead.

The President: Thank you very much, Ambassador. The next speaker on my list is the distinguished Ambassador of Argentina.

Mr. García Moritán (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, I should like to express my gratitude for having had the opportunity to work alongside you as a member of the P-6 over these past months. Just now, when you banged the presidential gavel to confirm the consensus, I was particularly moved because I am aware of the effort that has gone into giving our Conference a new direction in recent years. I have borne witness to the efforts made by the Presidents of the past year and by our colleagues from the P-6 this year. Mr. President, there can be no doubt that your task, in particular, has been one that we have followed with great interest. I believe that we can all see from your diplomatic skills, your personal efforts, your perseverance and your clear vision of the future that it was absolutely necessary for the Conference on Disarmament to take a decision today in order to pave the way for the future. I believe that you, like many of us, realized that we had reached a turning point. I also believe that this morning the Conference on Disarmament recovered the central role that its founders had envisaged for it. A door to the future has opened. Together with my colleagues from Austria and Australia and with you, my colleagues from Zimbabwe and Viet Nam, we shall continue in our efforts to ensure that our Conference remains in step with the decision taken this morning.

Mr. President, we extend to you our thanks, our admiration and our friendship.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Sir, and wish to express my gratitude to Argentina for the role it has continued to play in the preparation of this happy event.

(The President continues in English)

The distinguished Ambassador of China has the floor.

Mr. Wang Qun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The draft decision for the establishment of a programme of work for the 2009 session, which the Conference on

Disarmament has just adopted by consensus, will provide us with a programme of work for this year. China wishes to express its warm congratulations and welcome this outcome. We wish to convey our gratitude to Ambassador Jazaïry and the other five Presidents for your untiring efforts and valuable contributions, which have allowed us to bridge differences and reach a consensus. China commends your outstanding diplomatic skills, your open and transparent negotiating spirit and the sense of responsibility and mission you have displayed in your efforts to safeguard international peace and security.

The consensus we have reached today on the Conference's programme of work shows that the Conference, which is the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, has finally broken the deadlock that has existed for more than a decade and will soon resume its substantive work. It also shows that in the current international circumstances the Conference will continue to promote multilateral arms control and disarmament, and contribute to international peace and security. China will continue, as in the past, to take a constructive approach and actively participate in negotiations and substantive discussions on the relevant topics. As to the next steps, China believes that what is most important and pressing is that all parties should maintain a spirit of cooperation based on mutual tolerance and respect, and, through broad-ranging and transparent consultations on an equal footing, arrive at a balanced and concrete arrangement acceptable to all for dealing with such issues as the time allocated, working methods and selection of coordinators for each agenda item; this will provide the Conference with an excellent basis for effectively carrying out its substantive work. China will continue to play a constructive role in this process.

The President: I thank the distinguished Ambassador of China for his statement and express to him my appreciation also for the substantial support that he provided in moving towards consensus. The distinguished Ambassador of the United Kingdom has the floor.

Mr. Duncan (United Kingdom): Mr. President, on behalf of the United Kingdom, I would like to congratulate you and the P-6 on leading the Conference on Disarmament to the decision we have just taken on the programme of work.

Leadership is sometimes defined as comprising four elements: vision, to see the world as it might be; courage, to take up that vision and pursue it to fulfilment; and determination and steadfastness, to follow the path to success and to overcome the obstacles along the way. Vision, courage, determination and steadfastness are qualities that you have shown in full measure to the highest standards and traditions of international diplomacy.

This has indeed been a long and arduous path. For more than a decade we have been unable to take the decision on a programme of work. But now, from being the neglected orphan of multilateral diplomacy, the Conference on Disarmament has shown the way forward, shown what can be done when a group of nations refuses to be turned aside from their common purpose. This achievement is a collective effort, a tribute to cross-regional cooperation and to the efforts and determination of many individuals to reach out and find the areas of shared vision.

It is indeed fitting that the culmination of these efforts has been brought about under Algeria's presidency, an African and an Arab nation representing two of the world's great communities and a continent which has arguably gone the furthest in taking practical steps to achieve our common vision of a world free from nuclear weapons.

Mr. President, getting the Conference on Disarmament back to work on negotiations and substantive discussion is an essential element in achieving that objective. You and your P-6 colleagues may count on the United Kingdom's support in taking forward this important work.

The President: Thank you very much indeed, Ambassador. I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Chile.

Mr. Rogers (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much. Mr. President, firstly, allow me to pay a tribute to you and your team for your unremitting and intelligent efforts which have laid the foundation for the successful establishment of a programme of work for the Conference on Disarmament. We also appreciate the work done by all of the Presidents of this important negotiating body this year. This has been a collective undertaking that required commitment and flexibility on the part of all member States. The adoption of the programme of work is a reflection of the positive environment that has prevailed recently in international disarmament forums and systems. The Conference on Disarmament could not simply stand by during this positive development without taking advantage of such an opportunity.

The delegation of Chile strongly supports the adoption of document CD/1863. We believe that it is a document that has been carefully drafted and, through its delicate and balanced approach, has taken on board the many complex proposals that have been submitted over more than a decade. Chile endorses this new initiative, just as it has supported all previous initiatives aimed at salvaging the sole disarmament negotiating forum in the United Nations system.

The President: I thank you very much, Ambassador. Next is the Ambassador of Mexico.

Ms. Gómez Oliver (Mexico): Mr. President, on behalf of Mexico, I can only express my deep personal emotion and satisfaction at this historic moment when we adopted by consensus the programme of work for this Conference.

Not only are we at the start of an arduous task that we need to undertake in this forum, but we also face the prospect of working together, through this Conference, to help achieve the ultimate goal of nuclear disarmament and, with it, peace and security for all humanity.

Full of enthusiasm and energy, Mexico is ready to do everything it can to allow us to move forward decisively and steadfastly with the implementation of the newly adopted programme of work. We shall not shirk from the enormous challenge of achieving the consensus required to ensure the total elimination of nuclear weapons. However, the constructive spirit that has brought us to this historic day is certain to afford an ideal framework that we hope will prevail during our forthcoming deliberations and negotiations and which will allow us to make solid progress in achieving the goal of nuclear disarmament.

Lastly, my delegation wishes to place on record its gratitude to and appreciation of you, Ambassador Jazaïry, for your tireless efforts, your commitment, your leadership and your dedication in bringing us at last to this point.

I should also like to express the Mexican delegation's gratitude to all the members of the P-6, whose work has been truly instrumental in ensuring that this Conference fulfils its mandate and that we members are able to assume our responsibilities in a process that should usher us into a world free from nuclear weapons.

The President: Thank you, Madam Ambassador, for your comments and your contribution. I now give the floor to the distinguished Ambassador of Pakistan.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): Mr. President, it is a great pleasure for me to see you chairing this historic plenary of the Conference on Disarmament. We have just adopted the programme of work of the Conference contained in document CD/1863, after a gap of 10 years. This has been possible due to your sagacity, perseverance, dedication and

commitment. I would also like to thank the P-6 ambassadors for their contribution. Every successive President of the Conference over the past decade has played their role and made an honest effort to make this happen. The members of the Conference also deserve credit for their patience and commitment to multilateralism.

The adoption of the programme of work became possible as a result of policy shifts in favour of verification as the cardinal principle of multilateral disarmament, which Pakistan has consistently upheld. We welcome this change and hope that it will persist. Pakistan has maintained the principled and consistent position that the Conference on Disarmament is the most appropriate and most legitimate forum for negotiations on a fissile material treaty on the basis of the Shannon report of 1995, as part of a comprehensive and balanced programme of work of the Conference.

Document CD/1863 is not a perfect document, but Pakistan has joined the consensus on it because it reflects a compromise that enables us to break the impasse in the Conference. The next logical step is to lay out the foundation of our work and prepare well for our deliberations. The programme of work envisages the establishment of four working groups on the four core issues — nuclear disarmament, a fissile material treaty, the prevention of an arms race in outer space, and negative security assurances — under agenda items 1, 3 and 4, and to appoint three special coordinators under agenda items 5, 6 and 7. The allocation of time for the four working groups should be balanced so that progress on each issue is ensured. The appointment of chairs of the working groups should respect the principle of equal geographical representation. Transparency and inclusiveness should be the guiding principles for this process.

This momentous achievement has brought a great responsibility as well. Therefore, we must reflect and determine the objective of our serious work in this chamber. The objective which we all share is a world free of nuclear weapons. The international community has high expectations to strive for this vision. We must not fail. Pakistan is committed to the vision of a nuclear-weapon-free world. Therefore, nuclear disarmament should remain the highest priority for the Conference on Disarmament. In that context, I would like to reiterate the following key points that will guide our participation in the negotiation of a fissile material treaty. First, international treaties on non-proliferation and disarmament cannot be implemented properly unless inbuilt provisions of verification support them. Detailed verification procedures of the Chemical Weapons Convention and CTBT were agreed during negotiations on these instruments. The same logic should apply to a future fissile material treaty. And, second, a verifiable fissile material treaty covering stocks is a sine qua non for the effective cessation of a nuclear arms race. Such a treaty, once negotiated, would also strengthen global as well as regional peace and stability.

The issues of verification and stocks have become vital for Pakistan in any negotiations on a fissile material treaty because of the nuclear cooperation arrangements in our neighbourhood without adequate international safeguards. These have the potential for increasing fissile material stocks that could be diverted towards weapon production, as was done in the past.

As envisaged in CD/1863, we are to work for the conclusion of a legally-binding instrument on negative security assurances and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We have draft texts available to us, and it will be easier to pick up the threads of our work on these two issues where we have left them in the past.

The President: I thank you, Ambassador, and also for your support and efforts to achieve this happy moment. The distinguished Ambassador of France has the floor.

Mr. Danon (France) (*spoke in French*): Well, here we are: in my personal capacity, and with a great deal of emotion, I should like to say bravo to you, Mr. Ambassador, to you and of course to all your P-6 colleagues. Speaking formally, I should like to convey to you

the wholehearted congratulations of my Government on this historic achievement. The qualities you have displayed in order to achieve this outcome have been mentioned by others, and I should like to endorse what has been said.

The adoption of our programme of work marks a new phase in our work and a new start for the Conference on Disarmament. We also know full well that this is the long-awaited opportunity for the launching of negotiations on the fissile materials treaty. This expectation forms part of the plan of action of France, the European Union and many others, and we are delighted that this work may start very soon indeed.

Several delegations have already raised some substantive issues. I shall not do so today; everyone knows the French position. Today I think we should rejoice in the outcome we have achieved. There will be time enough in the coming days to discuss how we would like to move on from here; I simply wanted to mark this occasion, Mr. President, and to tell you how happy I am that we could do this while you were President.

The President (*spoke in French*): Thank you, Ambassador, for all the efforts that you yourself have made to help us at critical points to find solutions to problems, because this was not the result of the “working of the Holy Spirit”; it was action taken by individuals here present in this room, including Your Excellency, that has allowed us to overcome the problems we faced. So, once again, thank you very much indeed.

(The President continues in English)

The distinguished Ambassador of Australia has the floor.

Ms. Millar (Australia): Mr. President, this is a historic moment and one that we hope will lead us to be able to work in ways that will improve the security of all. Several colleagues have talked about being very moved. I share that very much, partly because I worked for many years on non-proliferation in the lead-up to the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference where it was agreed we should negotiate a fissile material cut-off treaty, and now it looks as if we might really do this. Secondly, because I think these issues are so vital to world peace that it is really quite an honour for all of us to think we might be able to make a contribution in that respect.

The adoption of CD/1863 was made possible by your efforts, Mr. President, and those of your predecessors — I would like to pay particular tribute here to the work of the South African Ambassador several years ago — but also, and very importantly, by the strong commitment of world leaders to tackle nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament and by all the member States represented in this chamber. You all deserve enormous thanks.

The French Ambassador a moment ago referred to the fact that we have time in the coming days to look at how we should proceed. I think that is absolutely right, but we all know that the hard work now is really about to begin. Delegations will, I think, after these years of inactivity, need time to prepare for FMCT negotiations in particular, and also for the serious deliberations on the prevention of an arms race in outer space and on negative security assurances and nuclear disarmament, as well as the other issues on our agenda for 2010.

So it seems to us — and I speak partly as a member of the P-6 here, but also in my national capacity — that we must use the coming period, the remainder of 2009, very wisely. We should identify the key issues of substance for our work, and we should develop clear ideas on how to organize ourselves for the first part of 2010 in a realistic, practical and balanced way, as others have mentioned, so that we can return in January next year, ready to start negotiations and begin our work.

Finally, members of this Conference, including myself, are deeply grateful to you, Mr. President. We are grateful for your experience, your wisdom, your outstanding intellectual contribution and your tireless efforts to guide the work of this Conference to this decision today. People often talk of tireless efforts, Mr. President, but I know that in your case it is absolutely true. I doubt if you have had a wink of sleep for weeks, and I do hope you are able to get some now, but we really thank you very much for all that you have done. It has been a pleasure working with you in this critical and very exciting period, and I look forward to working with you for the remainder of our time as members of the P-6 together.

The President: Thank you, Ambassador Millar, and rest assured that it was really a privilege for me to work with you as well in this endeavour. The distinguished representative of Austria has the floor.

Mr. Marschik (Austria): Mr. President, like other delegations today, I would like to focus on the decision that we have just adopted. You know of course the priority that Austria accords to disarmament and how for many years we have all tried to assist in making the Conference on Disarmament relevant again. The decision today could be a historic turning point for the Conference. Austria expects that the substantive work will begin in earnest now, without further delay.

I promise full cooperation with all partners, and as one of the P-6, Austria will do its best to serve the Conference in this respect to further the objectives of the Conference. The decision today became possible, as others have mentioned, as a result of the positive international developments that have given a boost to multilateral diplomacy in general and disarmament in particular. It became possible as a result of the spirit of compromise shown by delegations here in this chamber, and of course as a result of your efforts. You have proved yourself a brilliant diplomat and negotiator. You build bridges between groups and interests long-thought unbridgeable. You have acted as a really objective and fair chair devoted to achieving progress. You have proved yourself a real *citoyen du monde*. Thanks to you, and thanks to all the delegations who made this possible; we will try to continue helping you and assisting you in the work of the next months.

The President: Thank you very much for your contribution. I much appreciate what you have said. The distinguished representative of Sweden has the floor.

Mr. Hellgren (Sweden): Mr. President, like others and on behalf of the Swedish Government, I would like to express our great satisfaction with the decision we collectively took a few minutes ago. As you know, my delegation has over the years worked very hard to get the Conference on Disarmament back to real substantive work and negotiation, and that has taken the form of being part of the so-called A-5 proposal, together with Algeria, and as a P-6 member in 2007, and also together with our European Union partners who have made this a high priority over recent years.

Mr. President, we should also today express our special thanks to you personally, and your delegation, as well as your P-6 colleagues. Without your diplomatic skills and determination — and I stress determination — we might still be hesitating to take this final leap or the final steps over the bridge that has been built over the last few years. We are very, very grateful to you for taking us across the bridge.

For a few moments I think we will rejoice over this decision, but I can assure you, Mr. President and future presidents and P-6 members collectively, that, as of next week, my delegation will be ready to meet the challenges of fulfilling the tasks — and they are quite important — that we have given ourselves through CD/1863.

The President: Thank you. I now give the floor to the distinguished Ambassador of Tunisia.

Mr. Jemal (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, Tunisia warmly welcomes this historic moment that we have witnessed this morning. Tunisia welcomes with equal sincerity the commendable efforts that were made before the formal opening of the meeting this morning – that is, over the days leading up to this meeting and even in the last few minutes just before it started.

These efforts have led to a consensus which confers honour on the presidency of the Conference and the international community. The adoption of the programme of work on the basis of document CD/1863 will provide a relevant basis for our work that rests on the desire of all members of the Conference to achieve the noble and commendable objectives with which it has been entrusted.

Mr. President, 12 years without a decision is a very long time, but when we look at the importance of today's decision those 12 years vanish from our memories in the twinkling of an eye. And we are now moving on to a new, much longer period of arduous work.

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to thank you for that contribution. I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Egypt.

Mr. El-Dandarawy (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): Mr. President, I would like to take this opportunity to convey to you my country's great appreciation for your active efforts and those of your delegation to revitalize the work of this Conference and show the international community clearly that constructive cooperation to promote disarmament efforts and efforts to secure the future of our peoples is a real possibility, not a mirage. I also wish to convey to you, on behalf of my Ambassador, who was obliged to leave the room owing to other commitments, that the Egyptian delegation is ready to cooperate with you, with the P-6 and with all other members of the Conference in order to achieve our common objectives.

Please accept our compliments on your special and rare abilities, which have clearly contributed to this success, as you have been able to turn current international developments in disarmament issues to serve our common interests in this Conference.

In conclusion, Mr. President, we thank you and offer you our full consideration and appreciation.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank the representative of Egypt. The Ambassador of the Syrian Arab Republic has asked for the floor. Kindly go ahead, Sir.

Mr. Hamoui (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Thank you, Mr. President. This is a truly historic day that I believe the world will speak of for a long time to come. Today's tremendous achievement is due to the cooperation of the P-6, but also to your character, skills and diplomatic professionalism. We thank you and your colleagues in the P-6 for 2009 and congratulate you on your accomplishment.

Mr. President, the task ahead is long, but the first step has been taken today. The task ahead is also hard. However, we will try to take advantage of the improvement in the international climate of better cooperation and of the desire for dialogue and openness in order to move our work forward. We thank you, your colleagues in the P-6 and all the members of your delegation in Geneva and emphasize that we will make every effort to cooperate with you in order to start implementing the programme of work in all transparency and sincerity.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): Thank you very much, Your Excellency, for your kind words.

(The President continues in English)

I give the floor to the distinguished representative of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Vasiliev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): On behalf of Russia, I should like to congratulate you and your P-6 colleagues on the success that we have achieved today. It is indeed a groundbreaking event in the work of our forum, and we hope that it will open up a new chapter for new agreements that will strengthen international peace and security.

Russia is particularly happy that this has been achieved under your presidency, Sir. We very much value the friendly relations that exist between our two countries.

We have already had an opportunity to express our opinion on document CD/1863, and therefore I now wish only to assure you that we will be ready to work together with you in implementing all the provisions of this document. In this chamber it has been pointed out, including by you in your statement, that this success has been possible only in the new international climate. I should like to reaffirm that Russia is also prepared to make its contribution to ensuring that this positive climate can be transformed into specific agreements in the field of disarmament.

As you may know, on 1 June in Geneva the second round of the Russian-American negotiations on a new strategic arms reduction agreement are to be held. Russia will also continue to make its contribution within this very forum to ensure security and that no weapons are placed in outer space.

The President: I thank the distinguished representative of the Russian Federation, and I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of the United States of America.

Mr. Larson (United States of America): Mr. President, very briefly I would just like to echo the gratitude and the congratulations expressed in the foregoing interventions and extended particularly to you and to the entire P-6, which are so richly deserved. It is understandable that after over a decade of efforts we are focusing on a sense of achievement in today's decision, but we must also bear in mind that this is merely the start of the process, which will likely be difficult and often challenging. But the fact that we have reached this point gives us great confidence that our ultimate objective is indeed achievable, and I again am pleased to commit the United States delegation to continue to exert every effort and provide all assistance in the months ahead.

The President: Thank you very much for the support you have provided to the chair. The distinguished representative of Iraq has the floor.

Mr. Abbas (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Thank you very much, Mr. President. First, allow me to offer you and all of the P-6 my sincere congratulations on the clear and outstanding efforts that you have made from the outset with the submission of CD/1863 and until its adoption today. We are also most grateful for your patience and endurance, and for your tireless and persistent work for the adoption of this document through which you, and the member States, will be able to bring the Conference on Disarmament back to performing the real role with which it was entrusted. Mr. President, this is indeed an historic moment. We have every confidence that member States will make use of this opportunity and assume their collective responsibility in order to achieve our goal and implement the programme of work and we are fully prepared to offer our utmost cooperation to that end.

The President: I now give the floor to the distinguished Ambassador of Indonesia.

Mr. Djani (Indonesia): Mr. President, like others I would also like to congratulate you and all the P-6 presidents, as well as your delegation, for your untiring efforts. I think, like Ambassador Millar, that you must have lost a lot of sleep, and indeed I believe all of us have lost a lot of sleep. We were quite pessimistic at first, but my delegation believes that

miracles do happen, and I believe today we have witnessed the adoption of a momentous document, CD/1863. It is a new chapter in the history of the Conference on Disarmament. When we appealed to everyone a few weeks ago to adopt CD/1863 as a good starting point, we noted that the environment was ripe for us to move ahead, and I believe, like others in this chamber, that what we have achieved today is a monumental start and that CD/1863 is a monumental document. I believe that our joint efforts to build a safe and peaceful world free of nuclear weapons are nearing a conclusion. I know the road ahead is still full of challenges, but I believe that if we continue to talk and have a constructive dialogue we will be able to achieve the wishes and dreams of all humankind, that is, to have a world that is safe for all.

My delegation is committed to making its best efforts and to working with all presidents. We hope that what we have achieved today will be continuously and vigorously followed up so that this new starting point, this momentum, will be preserved for the future. I wish all future presidents the best in their efforts and success in their endeavours.

The President: Thank you, and we share your wishes, Ambassador. The distinguished representative of Ireland has the floor.

Mr. O'Shea (Ireland): Mr. President, only yesterday I had the honour of addressing the Conference on Disarmament and recalling the words spoken here five years ago by Ireland's then foreign minister, who is now our Prime Minister, where he expressed regret that since Ireland had joined the Conference on Disarmament in 1999, he had "seen no work of any significance take place here". There is no delegation more happy than mine that those words may now have to be revised, and we now have the possibility at least of seeing some significant work, with, we hope, significant results emerging from it in the Conference. I would like to express my delegation's heartiest congratulations to you and appreciation to you and your fellow members of the P-6, and the presidents who have preceded you over the last three years, for bringing us to this happy occasion.

I hope you will permit me to refer to another forum, because there is one which has its anniversary today and in which our delegation was particularly involved. Exactly one year ago in Dublin, on the last Friday of May, my ambassador was sitting in the position where you are now, and brought the gavel down on a new instrument of international law, the Convention on Cluster Munitions. That, I have to say, was an arduous and a difficult undertaking for a small delegation like Ireland's, but it bears no comparison with the task which faced you as President of the Conference on Disarmament, because all the countries participating in the Dublin negotiations were there because they had a certain amount of commitment to the overall objective. You, as President of an established international body, have had to deal with the members who are already in that body, and it is a much more difficult situation.

On 3 June last year, I had the honour to report to this Conference on the outcome of the diplomatic conference in Dublin, and I well recall the remark of the distinguished Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, who was at that time the President of the Conference on Disarmament: he referred to the result which had been achieved in Dublin as an example of the need for the established diplomatic machinery to resume its work because of the danger obviously that people might be tempted to seek solutions elsewhere.

We are therefore extremely happy, Mr. President, that the established diplomatic machinery has, through your great efforts and those of your colleagues, demonstrated finally its ability to get back to work. We assure you of our full willingness and readiness to take a full part in that work, and we look forward very much to it.

The President: Thank you very much. I now give the floor to the distinguished Ambassador of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Im Han-taek (Republic of Korea): Mr. President, let me briefly express my gratitude to you and the P-6 for the last four weeks under your term. We believe you have demonstrated excellent leadership and creativity, which has brought us to the long-sought agreement on the programme of work today. I also congratulate all the member States, who have shown enormous flexibility and patience in arriving at a seemingly unachievable consensus today. We are also very happy to be part of this historic decision. Now that the door to negotiations has opened before us, we hope that this spirit of flexibility will continue into our substantive work on the eventual formulation of an FMCT. The Republic of Korea will remain committed to working constructively in the Conference on Disarmament in the future.

The President: Ambassador, I thank you for your contribution. I now give the floor to the distinguished Ambassador of Spain.

Mr. Bugallo (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, members of the P-6, please accept my heartfelt congratulations.

Speaking in my national capacity, I can only say what is already common knowledge, and that is that Spain has always endeavoured to be part of the solution by not being part of the problem. We have endorsed all initiatives put forward in this chamber and have initiated and facilitated some of them, such as document L.1 during the year in which we held the presidency. In my national capacity, then, I can only congratulate myself and this group for finally managing to break the impasse that has lasted for over a decade – 12 years in fact.

It is no secret, as the Ambassador of Australia and the representative of the United States of America have said, that the real work begins now. It is from this moment on that our ability to negotiate on several fronts simultaneously and to achieve results based on reality will actually be put to the test. That divorce from reality has probably been the highest price we have had to pay in the last few years.

I thus conclude my address in my national capacity. As the coordinator of the Group of Western European and Other States, I would like to announce that at the closure of this meeting the Western Group will meet in Room II, next door – I presume that all members of the Group will know what I am referring to: the formal opening of the bottle of whisky that has been waiting in anticipation of this happy moment, I don't know for exactly how long because it got here long before I did, but, I think it has been at least six years.

The President: Thank you, Ambassador, for your contribution.

Mr. Kellerman (South Africa): Mr. President, I fear we do not have anything as attractive to offer as my distinguished colleague from Spain, but I thought it would be remiss of me not to congratulate you and your fellow members of the P-6.

If you would allow me just a little personal reflection, I have been in Geneva now a little over five years, and I am due to return to South Africa at the end of next month, having finished my posting here. Some colleagues in capital have started making strange suggestions that whilst I have been here for five years, the Conference on Disarmament has never managed to agree on a programme of work, and maybe it might have something to do with me. So from that point of view, I am really delighted that we have actually reached this point; now I can go back and at least say, whilst I was in Geneva, the Conference on Disarmament did manage to agree on something.

Again on a personal note, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, the secretariat, the P-6, and also your collaborator, and my old friend and colleague, Hamza Khelif. Although Hamza was not able, during his posting in Geneva, to agree on a programme of work for the Conference, at least he got another bite of the cherry, and will be delighted to have come back from Algiers and joined us here for this breakthrough.

The President: I thank the distinguished representative of South Africa and indeed I join him in expressing to Hamza Khelif, my assistant in this endeavour, my great appreciation for his commitment to achieving the objectives that were finally achieved.

The distinguished representative of Portugal has the floor.

Mr. Duarte (Portugal): Mr. President, as a representative of a country fully committed to disarmament and arms control, I cannot but take the floor at this time to wholeheartedly congratulate you and the P-6 platform on this important achievement. My country is very happy with this development. We will continue to follow the work of the Conference on Disarmament closely, and, again, my congratulations to you and to the whole Conference.

The President: I thank you very much.

I have reached the end of my list of speakers, and if there are no more speakers, I will conclude this session with a few improvised remarks.

We have become friends over the time we have been working together. I have had a long career in diplomacy, as many of you have mentioned, but I must say this is one of the high points of it, and it was worth living just for this event. First, because I feel that the decision that in your wisdom you have taken today is one that will reinforce multilateralism; and I must say that my career, ever since I started at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1959, has been closely associated with multilateralism. So, by taking this decision, not only have you saved the Conference on Disarmament from possible demise, but you have set it up as an example of what partnership can achieve when we break down the official barriers that sometimes unfortunately separate North and South today, as they separated East and West in yesteryear.

My hope is that this spirit of partnership across borders, across regions and across continents will permeate other institutions meeting in Geneva so that multilateralism will not only survive, but actually thrive in broader areas of activity. It does seem to me that if the twenty-first century is about anything, it is about saving the planet through multilateral effort. Nothing else will do.

I would like to pay tribute first and foremost to the wisdom of the membership of the Conference for having made this achievement possible. Whatever time my P-6 colleagues and myself could have spent would have been to no avail if there had not been a readiness by all of you to accept this compromise. I know how difficult it was for some members. It was difficult right up to the last minute. But as they say, a play or a novel that keeps up the suspense until the last minute is probably the best you can find on the market. I do appreciate the efforts of all members, but in particular of those who had problems and received no instructions until the very last minute to be able to join the consensus so that we could save this multilateral forum.

I would like to pay tribute to those who invented the P-6. Someone said it was an informal arrangement. Well, formal or informal, it is pretty efficient. I think it was the Ambassador of Poland who initiated this approach, and I am grateful to him, because it has given me an opportunity to treasure, together with the happenstance of the alphabet putting me in contact with a group of five other ambassadors from other regions and discovering that we all thought in the same way, and we were working together. That was what the NGOs said yesterday when they spoke — and I quoted this in my statement today — “moving from positions to an awareness of common interest”. I am grateful to the Ambassador of Poland for having provided this framework, as I am to all those referred to by the representative of Sweden, the Five Ambassadors, or A-5. I remember before that there was the Amorim proposal, in document CD/1624. After the A-5 there were the draft

decisions contained in CD/2007/L.1 and CD/1840. And all those are building blocks on which we have just put the roof, as it were, though the roof without the foundations or walls would not go very far, would it?

So to all those who have contributed to preparing these documents, please accept our deep gratitude. Special mention should be made of the P-6 and amongst the P-6 I would like to pay tribute to the Ambassador of Viet Nam, who first got us started this year on this great ultimate adventure, the straight line before the finish, and to the Ambassador of Zimbabwe, who carried the flame further and even enabled me to start my consultations as a simple P-6 member and not as a President, to make sure that we could be on time for today's happy event.

Beyond that, I would like to say how indebted we are to the secretariat and to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, who graced us with his presence here. He did so not just because he was coming to Geneva to address the World Health Assembly. He did it because he felt that this was an historic opportunity, and he wanted to give us his support, and that support was very helpful in further strengthening the momentum to get to where we are today. So, we send him our warm thanks, and also thank the Secretary-General of the Conference and the able secretariat team that has been so helpful in providing us with the framework that has made it possible for us to deliver on what was expected of us.

With your permission, I would also like to tell you — to let you in on a State secret — that the outcome was not just the result of the efforts of Mr. Khelif, myself and the rest of my team here in Geneva. This was just the tip of the iceberg. I would like you to know that President Butaflika himself was involved in this. You know that he was the first President of the Committee of the Conference on Disarmament, and in his present position as Head of State he did not just give me instructions — which is an easy thing to do — he went out of his way to mobilize the whole of our diplomatic corps with the assistance of our foreign minister to make sure that whatever could be done with his support at the highest level was done — that any hurdle anywhere in the world concerning any member with which we had diplomatic relations could be overcome. And that is why — and all of you who get feedback from capital must be aware of this — I would like this to be recognized at this point. Last but not least, I would like to express our gratitude and appreciation to the secretarial staff and the interpreters who have been helping in this meeting for the good work done. Nobody has complained of any translation problems at all! Thank you very much to all of you.

So, with these comments and renewed thanks for all the kind words that you addressed to the P-6 and to myself personally, I would like to bring this meeting to a close. Let me tell you how moved I am also, how touched, and how rewarding my presidency has been for myself. Thank you all.

The next meeting, under the presidency of my eminent successor, the Ambassador of Argentina, will take place next Thursday at the same time, 10 a.m.

The meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.