
Conference on Disarmament

1 March 2011

English

Final record of the one thousand two hundred and eleventh plenary meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 1 March 2011, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Pedro Oyarce(Chile)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I call to order the 1211th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. At the beginning of today's plenary meeting, I would like to extend a very warm welcome from this council to our guest today, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, His Excellency Mr. Sergey Lavrov.

Your presence at this Conference today, Mr. Minister, shows the importance your country attaches to the work of the Conference and to multilateral and bilateral efforts on behalf of disarmament and non-proliferation. I now give you the floor.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): This is the second time in the last couple of years that I have had occasion to speak to the Conference on Disarmament. I think that this is a useful practice, and I hope that you feel the same.

The Conference is a unique forum both in terms of its membership and given the scale of the tasks facing it. Clearly, all of us present in the room today are united in our understanding that there is no alternative to collective efforts to seek responses to the global threats and challenges facing us. This requires a positive unifying agenda which will enable us to arrive at a stable balance of interests on the basis of the legitimate concerns of each State, and we are convinced that this is the key to consolidating peace and security.

I would note that the understanding of this reality has already borne fruit: in discussions on security issues in the Euro-Atlantic area, confrontation, suspicion and prejudice are declining and there is greater striving towards cooperation and building mutual trust. There are also healthy trends in disarmament and arms control. Among the most important achievements in recent times we have seen the entry into force of the Russian-American Treaty on measures for the further reduction and limitation of strategic offensive arms, as well as the successful holding in 2010 of the Conference to review the application of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The New START Treaty is a contribution made by Russia and the United States to the consolidation of global security and the non-proliferation regime, to moving forward the process of nuclear disarmament in accordance with obligations under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The reductions provided for in the START Treaty will be irreversible, verifiable and transparent in nature. And given its principles of equality, parity, equal and indivisible security, the Treaty will become a sort of gold standard for achieving agreement in the military-political dimension of international relations.

Many are asking what comes next. I think that, first of all, we need to assess the effectiveness and viability of this new Treaty as it is implemented in practice. The full realization of the measures contained within it will lead us to a point where we will need to take account of all aspects of efforts to ensure strategic stability. This means that further progress towards nuclear disarmament will require the resolution of a whole range of specific issues. I will try to show you what we think about this.

It is clear that Moscow and Washington still hold the biggest nuclear arsenals. But we do not live in a vacuum. Quantitative reductions in various elements of the Russian and United States nuclear arsenals will mean that the numbers of delivery vehicles will be more and more important. In the final analysis, the real deterrent potential will depend on the number of delivery vehicles, their technical features, their viability and a number of other factors.

The involvement of all nuclear States without exception in the process of limiting and or reducing their own arsenals is increasingly urgent. Understanding this is becoming part of the broad socio-political discussion.

I note the ideas which have been put forward by the Global Zero initiative, the Luxembourg and Munich forums and a few other NGOs that specialize in the theme of

global security. Their proposals contain much which is reasonable and constructive. We intend to continue to interact positively with these organizations in order to have intellectual input for intergovernmental negotiations.

In our contacts we set out in detail the Russian position on prospects for the nuclear disarmament process. This position underscores the key principle that security is indivisible. We insist on the need to take account of such negative influences on strategic stability as the plans for deploying weapons in outer space, the creation of non-nuclear strategic offensive weapons and the deployment of a unilateral global ABM system. We also cannot ignore the significant imbalances in conventional weapons, especially against the backdrop of dangerous conflict situations persisting in many parts of the world. So that talking about "global zero" while closing one's eyes to all these factors and their interconnections is not possible. Besides, these very factors and their interconnections need to be taken into account in the discussions on prospects for reductions in tactical nuclear weapons. And the first step in resolving this problem in all circumstances must be the removal of tactical nuclear weapons to the territory of the States which own them, and the elimination of infrastructure for deploying them abroad. Thus, this whole range of problems is rather complex, and it requires an integrated, painstaking approach on the part of all States.

At the same time, there are a number of priority issues on the disarmament agenda which must and can be resolved right away. Notable among them is the rapid entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Again we call on all countries which have not yet signed and ratified this treaty to do so. Of course, unilateral moratoriums on nuclear tests are useful, but they cannot replace a commitment in international law to respect this obligation of key importance for global security.

Another priority is efforts by all to implement in good faith the plan of action adopted at the NPT Review Conference in May 2010. This document contains a well-tryed and balanced agenda for joint work in the field of nuclear non-proliferation, disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. It is of great importance that the NPT parties declared their attachment to strengthening the verification capacities of IAEA and universalization of the additional protocol to the safeguards agreement. Russia will consistently pursue the implementation of all these agreements.

Concerning the peaceful use of nuclear energy, we are convinced that multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle offer the best way to put into practice the pivotal principle of the indissoluble link between the three component parts of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. I think it is extremely clear that expanding access to peaceful nuclear energy is possible only if there is strict compliance with the very highest non-proliferation standards. Our common task is to prevent the proliferation of sensitive technologies throughout the world, while at the same time ensuring that conscientious NPT parties can realize their legitimate right to develop nuclear energy. As you know, this is the context for the Russian initiatives to set up an international centre for uranium enrichment in our country and create a security stock of low-enriched uranium under IAEA management.

The successful holding of the NPT Conference last year would hardly have been possible without success in securing agreement on specific steps to implement the 1995 resolution on the creation of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery in the Middle East. We call for immediate steps to prepare for the international conference on the subject scheduled for 2012, including the appointment of a coordinator for the preparatory process. Recent events in the Middle East region make this task a highly urgent one.

Despite the positive steps forward in multilateral disarmament it has not yet been possible to overcome fully the inertia from the past, and this is something that we have seen here in the Geneva Conference. I am talking about the fact that the agreement on the work programme reached in 2009 has not yet led to the beginning of substantive negotiations.

We regret this because the unique potential of the Conference as the multilateral negotiating forum for the drafting of key international agreements remains frozen.

The Russian Federation took an active part in the high-level meeting convened at the initiative of the Secretary-General in New York in September last year to seek ways of breaking the deadlock in the Conference and the multilateral disarmament system as a whole. The discussion was continued at the beginning of the year here in Geneva, and is due to be continued.

Many ideas were voiced, including some very radical ones, for example the review of the consensus rule in the work of the Conference or the beginning of negotiations on items on its agenda in other forums. We cannot support such proposals.

The consensus rule is the fundamental principle of the disarmament machinery. Any other approach is simply inadmissible in the sphere of security, where each State has its own legitimate interests. They cannot be ignored. On the contrary: we need to continue patiently to seek mutually acceptable solutions. Among other things, this means refraining from misusing the rule of consensus, or trying to turn it into a right of veto. But in any case, however complicated it may be, it is necessary to seek compromise and not to try to find an easy way out by launching parallel negotiating processes outside the Conference on Disarmament. Otherwise, we are convinced, we will see a degradation in the whole system of multilateral disarmament.

What I have said fully applies to the problem of beginning negotiations on a universal, equitable and verifiable treaty to prohibit the production of fissile material for weapons purposes. An essential condition for success in these negotiations is that they should be held here in the Conference and not outside it. Only thus can we ensure the participation of all the key players.

Russia's absolute priority in the Conference on Disarmament is to prevent an arms race in outer space. In a month and a half, mankind will be celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of Yuri Gagarin's exploit, which will for ever be ranked as one of the greatest achievements of civilization.

And it is all the more important today to show a responsible and protective approach to the use of outer space. We are sometimes asked: why worry, since there is no real problem at the moment? This is an approach which we think is wrong. There is already enough capacity in the world to make it possible to launch weapons in outer space or to use force against space vehicles, and the boosting of this potential will enhance its destabilizing effect.

Russia and China were guided by a wish to avoid the worst-case scenario when they submitted a draft treaty to prohibit the deployment of weapons in outer space in February 2008. We believe that a treaty in this area should enshrine legal obligations on a basis of parity – without dividing countries into those which “may” have weapons in outer space and those which “may not”.

We hope that there will soon be a rapid start to substantive work on the Russian-Chinese draft. If we do not deal with this right away, the opportunity might slip past. We are convinced that prevention of the appearance of weapons in outer space is vital to ensure a predictable strategic situation here on Earth. We shall not forget that back in the old days, the chimera of nuclear monopoly led to an arms race whose momentum we are only now beginning to overcome. The growing acknowledgement by many countries of how

important this problem is was confirmed by the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of a resolution on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space which we initiated together with a large group of States. We will seek to further strengthen the efforts of the international community on this very important issue.

Russia confirms its readiness for a substantive discussion on security assurances for non-nuclear States in the Conference, including the preparation of a legally binding treaty on the issue. We will also join in the consensus on the establishment of a subsidiary body of the Conference to discuss nuclear disarmament issues.

I stress again that all these tasks can be resolved only if the Conference functions effectively. We learned with interest of some of the proposals on how to step up its activities. In particular, we believe that a balanced step-by-step approach to expansion of the membership of the Conference and the participation of NGOs in its informal sessions may help to bring out fresh and promising ideas which are important for our practical work.

The Conference has an impressive track record: many international agreements which form the foundation of the present-day system have been developed within it. And our task — I am sure you will all agree with me — is to confirm and strengthen the viability of the Conference. This is also called for by the objective realities of the many-centred world which is taking shape, in which problems can only be resolved collectively. We are ready for this work.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much, Mr. Minister, for your address to this Conference.

We shall suspend the meeting for a few minutes so that I can escort the Minister out of the room, and then we shall resume our work with the representative of Iran.

The meeting was suspended at 10.30 a.m. and resumed at 10.35 a.m.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Council would now like to welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Aliakbar Salehi. It is an honour to see you in the Conference today, and this demonstrates the contribution that your country is making to this forum. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. Salehi (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. President, it is a pleasure for me to address the Conference on Disarmament today. I take this opportunity to congratulate you on the assumption of the presidency of the Conference. I wish you and the Secretary-General of the Conference success in your important responsibilities.

The international community today is faced with serious challenges such as nuclear weapons, climate change and the outbreak of infectious diseases and poverty. These are some common predicaments many States in different geographical regions face. This dire situation calls for all nations to join hands so as to curb the situation and make the world a more prosperous place for current and forthcoming generations.

In a situation of insecurity, it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, for States and international organizations to pursue their socio-economic and cultural goals. Security is the basic need and right of all human beings and the prerequisite for the development of all nations. Achieving a reliable and lasting peace and sustainable security based on justice and respect for international law in the world is assumed to be the prime aim of the United Nations.

I now wish to elaborate on the concept of “sustainable security”. This concept is non-discriminatory in character; it serves the common interest of security for all, based on an equal footing, and relies on realistic threat perception by avoiding the creation of artificial phobias. In a viable system benefiting from sustainable security, there is not a country or group of countries that defines its security at the cost of the insecurity of the

others. The rule of law overcomes the use of force. Justice and equality are its main principles. We should, however, bear in mind that such security can only be achieved through political will and by establishing the necessary mechanisms.

Currently the gravest threat to sustainable security is the existence of thousands of nuclear warheads in the stockpiles of nuclear-weapon States. The threat would be doubled if some of these countries felt free to threaten others, including non-nuclear-weapon States, with the use of these immoral and illegitimate weapons.

It is a matter of serious concern that humankind continues to live under the shadow of the possible use of weapons of mass destruction. We believe that the use of these weapons, particularly nuclear weapons, is a crime against humanity, and thus the international community should react collectively by redoubling its efforts to get rid of the threats posed by such weapons once and for all. In this context, we believe that the destruction of chemical weapons is and remains the fundamental bedrock of the Chemical Weapons Convention. This obligation forms the security balance devised in the Convention, as negotiated by this Conference. The credibility of the Convention will be in jeopardy if such destruction is not achieved. The recent alarming indication by the two major possessor States that they would not be able to meet the final extended deadline of 29 April 2012 to complete the destruction of their stockpiles of chemical weapons has become a source of grave concern. Therefore, we urge all possessor States parties, in particular the two major possessor States, to comply with their obligations under the Convention by meeting the final extended deadline for the destruction of their chemical weapons.

The lack of progress towards nuclear disarmament, and greater global military expenditure, has augmented security concerns everywhere in the world. The strategic shift and the unilateral approach adopted by a major Power have, *inter alia*, paralysed the disarmament machinery. Consequently, the Conference on Disarmament has been unable to embark upon meaningful negotiations on the most urgent security requirement for our world today, namely nuclear disarmament.

The existence of thousands of nuclear weapons in the arsenals of a few countries is capable of destroying the whole world many times over. Any use of nuclear weapons, either by accident or deliberately, would be catastrophic.

There are at least 23,000 nuclear warheads in the hands of a few countries. Every one of these weapons has far greater destructive power than the bombs which devastated Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Nearly 10,000 of these weapons remain operationally deployed. Over 2,000 nuclear weapons are on the dangerous "high alert" position and could be launched within minutes. As long as these weapons exist and are being modernized, there will always be a risk of their proliferation.

According to reliable statistics, world military spending has almost doubled in the past decade to reach \$1.6 trillion in 2009. Between 2008 and 2009 alone, spending increased by 5.9 per cent. This situation is alarming in itself. A more dangerous world could also be imagined if the same trend in military spending continues.

The maintenance of strategic and tactical nuclear forces and their continued modernization, as well as new military doctrines setting the rationale for their possible use, particularly against non-nuclear-weapon States, represent the greatest threat to humankind. There is an urgent need for nuclear disarmament in order to build a safer and more secure world.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) did not provide the right for nuclear-weapon States to keep their nuclear arsenals indefinitely. They have an obligation towards the total elimination of these weapons, as enshrined in article VI of the NPT, which has yet to be fulfilled. The relevant advisory opinion of the International Court

of Justice underlines clearly that “there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control”.

At the NPT 2010 Review Conference, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries proposed the adoption of a legal framework within a specified time frame for the total elimination of nuclear weapons by 2025. Although the proposal was resisted by some parties to the NPT, we maintain our firm conviction that concrete and clear actions are needed in order to achieve nuclear disarmament.

It is regrettable that, a long time after the cold war, military alliances based on the nuclear umbrella still exist, and that nuclear sharing continues and deployment of nuclear weapons in the territory of other non-nuclear-weapon States is still being exercised.

It is high time for the Conference on Disarmament to establish an ad hoc committee to start its negotiations on a nuclear weapons convention as a matter of priority. This convention could be a framework treaty encompassing the following areas: banning the production, development and the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons; renouncing the deterrence values of nuclear weapons in all defence doctrines; preventing the deployment of nuclear weapons in all areas, namely on the ground, underwater, in space and outer space; banning the production of fissile material for military purposes; declaring all stocks of weapons-grade fissile material and their elimination in an irreversible manner within an agreed timetable; declaring all warheads and de-alerting them in a verifiable manner; eliminating nuclear warheads in a phased programme and in an irreversible manner within a specific time frame.

At the regional level, the situation in the Middle East is indeed alarming. It stems from the possession of nuclear weapons by the Zionist regime, which poses a serious threat to the stability of the entire region and international peace and security. The constant use of inhumane weapons by this regime against civilians has further intensified the security concerns in the region. Thus the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons is of the utmost importance. The establishment of such a zone was proposed by the Islamic Republic of Iran during the twenty-ninth session of the General Assembly in 1974 and we have vigorously pursued the proposal to date. It is a matter of concern that all efforts to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East have not yet succeeded, due to the persistent refusal of the Zionist regime to join the NPT and to place its nuclear facilities under the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards system. It is disappointing that in defiance of the demands of the international community, this regime enjoys the full support of some nuclear-weapon States.

We urge all countries to respect outer space as the global heritage of all mankind by making the environment safe and secure for all human beings. A serious threat to the peaceful uses of outer space is the development of anti-satellite weapons and anti-ballistic-missile systems. Technologies developed for missile defence have many applications that constitute a potential threat to space-based assets. This threat would be doubled if some countries develop their complicated space-to-Earth strike capability. Seeking dominance of space is a misapprehended self-defeating route to space security. It took several decades of cold-war arms race for nuclear Powers to realize that a nuclear war could never be won. Therefore, we should not replicate the mistakes of the past in the case of space.

In conclusion, I would like to accentuate that the production, possession, development, use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, under any pretext, is illegitimate, immoral and inhumane. The indefinite extension of the NPT does not in any way mean the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons. The three pillars of the NPT should not be narrowed down to one pillar, namely non-proliferation. The two other pillars are equally important. The security of the world should not be subordinated to the security of those

who have nuclear weapons. A new aristocracy based on two classes of international civilians of “haves” and “have-nots” should not be tolerated any more. Nuclear energy cannot be equated with nuclear weapons, and the right of all States for peaceful nuclear activities should be guaranteed. Monopolizing scientific knowledge and peaceful nuclear energy is an unrealistic illusion. Suppression, deprivation, intimidation and double standards are the main evils that should be expunged from international relations. We should be united and work together to pave the way for sustainable security by adhering to the principle of the rule of law and security for all. I am confident that this august body can make an important contribution in this regard. The Islamic Republic of Iran stands prepared for further engagement in a constructive negotiation that will ensure the implementation of these principles.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran for his kind words to the Chair and for the views and messages he presented.

I shall suspend the meeting to escort the Minister from the room.

The meeting was suspended at 10.53 a.m. and resumed at 10.55 a.m.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Conference has the honour to receive the Minister for European Affairs and Integration of the Republic of Moldova, His Excellency Mr. Iurie Leancă. Minister, your participation in the Conference demonstrates the contribution your country is making to the multilateral system of disarmament and non-proliferation. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. Leancă (Republic of Moldova): Mr. President, it is a great privilege for me to address the Conference on Disarmament in this historic chamber where the League of Nations met and where important disarmament treaties were negotiated and concluded. The very spirit of this room obliges us to reaffirm our commitment to peace through practical disarmament action.

I would like to commend your foresight in continuing the practice of inviting ministerial-level representatives of all United Nations Member States to engage with the Conference on Disarmament. Disarmament and non-proliferation are indeed issues of global concern, and any country has much to lose if there is no progress in this area.

The increased participation in the Conference on Disarmament deliberations of foreign ministers representing observer States not only demonstrates continued political support for the work of the Conference, but also illustrates a growing sense of frustration, as has already been observed, that this important body has not been used for much purpose at all for many years now.

Let me stress that faced with the realities of a changing world, we can no longer allow ourselves the luxury of staying inert and merely witnessing the evolution of new threats and menaces to international security. Let's be frank and recognize – we are already behind schedule.

Some disarmament issues have been pending since the last century, waiting to be addressed by the Conference on Disarmament. There are two possibilities: to wait inactively, hoping that the threats will be also patient; to take concrete steps to protect humanity from an uncontrolled arms regime disaster.

We share the prevailing concerns that, if the present stalemate is prolonged, we might lose the only multilateral treaty breeder the international community has in the field of security and disarmament. No doubt, as we have witnessed in the recent past, much-needed and effective multilateral legal instruments can be generated by using other ad hoc negotiating formats. The Convention on Cluster Munitions and its predecessor, the Ottawa

Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, are often referred to in that regard.

Yet we continue to believe that the Conference of Disarmament should remain the central multilateral body with responsibility for negotiating agreements, particularly those that are critical to international security.

Obviously, treaties are not the panacea for international security and stability. Nevertheless, they are the basis of our collective security. The small States that lack military power, as in the case of my own country, have no choice but to rely on building and strengthening a rule-based international system.

Based on this understanding, the Republic of Moldova has ratified or adhered to all major disarmament and non-proliferation treaties and agreements at both global and regional levels. Moreover, we have joined international efforts aimed at fostering and promoting the principles of international humanitarian law. As a State party to all relevant multilateral legal instruments, including the most recent one — the Convention on Cluster Munitions — we are committed to their implementation and to the universalization of their norms.

One of our expectations is that a rule-based international system with functional and strong institutions would prevent the uncontrolled expansion of armaments, including in conflict-prone regions, and would encourage transparency and concrete disarmament measures.

In this context, I would like to underscore the need for adequate transparency and control over the significant military potential retained by the self-proclaimed regime in the Transdnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova. The presence of heavily equipped armed forces in this part of Europe that are not subject to any democratic, constitutional or international control whatsoever should be of grave concern to us all. It is also imperative to find a solution to the issue of withdrawal of foreign troops and ammunition stationed in Moldova without host nation consent.

I take this opportunity to reiterate Moldova's unconditional commitment to identifying a peaceful, lasting and comprehensive solution for the Transdnistrian conflict exclusively by means of political negotiations. Our philosophy to this end rests first and foremost with a robust policy of effective confidence- and security-building measures aimed, among other things, at decreasing the military factor in the region.

The Republic of Moldova is strongly attached to the need for transparency in armaments, as we consider it a strong and valuable measure for enhancing confidence and security among States. Especially at such a time, when the Conference on Disarmament has been in a stalemate situation for more than a decade, it seems that confidence-building is just what the Conference needs the most.

Surprisingly, as it has emerged from the conclusions of various consultations with Conference on Disarmament members, apart from the four core issues contained in the Conference on Disarmament agenda, interest in the other non-core issues, including transparency in armaments and conventional arms, is non-existent. These particular circumstances might again prompt the interested States to follow alternative ways of achieving progress. This is why we believe that the Conference on Disarmament needs to start substantive work as soon as possible on the so-called non-controversial items, while continuing consultations for a consensual solution on other remaining items.

Still in this context, it should be emphasized that, in our view, there are no convincing arguments for further delaying the negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) based on the so-called Shannon mandate. The imperative to advance constructive work on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, on negative security

assurances and on nuclear disarmament is also evident. In order to make all this possible, the Conference on Disarmament needs a programme of work. From this perspective, document CD/1864 or any other similar proposal may offer a platform that would enable the Conference on Disarmament members to address their national interests at various stages of negotiations and substantive discussions.

The Republic of Moldova hopes that members of the Conference on Disarmament will be able to bridge their differences and soon embark on constructive and effective work. By doing so, the Conference on Disarmament will meet the expectations of the international community – namely, that of making our world a much more peaceful and secure place.

In conclusion, I would like to express special appreciation to Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, Secretary-General of the Conference, who will soon be leaving the Organization. We thank you, Mr. Secretary-General, for your professionalism, dedication and invaluable contribution both to the Conference on Disarmament and to the United Nations. On behalf of the Moldovan delegation, I wish you the very best of health, happiness and success in your future endeavours.

Mr. President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Minister, for your words addressed to the Chair and the Secretary-General, as well as for your views. We shall suspend the meeting for a couple of minutes while I escort the Minister from the room.

The meeting was suspended at 11.05 a.m. and resumed at 11.10 a.m.

Mr. President (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour for the Conference to receive the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia and its former Prime Minister, Mr. Kevin Rudd. We are grateful for your presence here, Minister, your participation today in the Conference, because everyone is aware of the contribution which has been and is being made by Australia to the multilateral system of disarmament and non-proliferation and to this Conference in particular. I offer you the floor, Sir.

Mr. Rudd (Australia): Mr. President, it is an honour to be here in this most historic of chambers. As distinguished delegates will know, this was the last home of the Council of the League of Nations. Regrettably, we all know the history of the League of Nations. We also know its fate. The League of Nations had its own Conference on Disarmament – the Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments. It is instructive for us all to read the solemn warnings with which that Conference was launched. The President of that Conference was the British Foreign Secretary, Arthur Henderson, and at the first plenary meeting, on 2 February 1932, which also happened to be a Tuesday, he said: “I refuse to contemplate even the possibility of failure. For if we fail, no one can foretell the evil consequences which might ensue.” These remarks were prophetic words. However, the final desultory documents of that Conference in 1937 tell an all too familiar story, a story of process, a story of disengagement, a story of elusive agreement and all occurring at the worst possible time.

This Conference on Disarmament, I believe, is at a similar juncture: either it gets down to its business, the business of negotiating with the necessary mandates from capitals, or it too will be washed away by history. That, I believe, is the reality we now confront.

The Conference on Disarmament remains the only standing multilateral forum for negotiating disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control agreements. It therefore has an extraordinary mandate.

Australia comes to the Conference with a continuing commitment to a world free of nuclear weapons, and we want to achieve this through collaborative, balanced and progressive steps.

The President of the United States, Mr. Barack Obama, pinpointed the current danger in his speech in April 2009 in Prague, when he said: “Today, the cold war has disappeared but thousands of those weapons have not. In a strange turn of history, the threat of global nuclear war has gone down, but the risk of a nuclear attack has gone up.” With this speech, the President of the United States marked a reinvigorated approach by the United States to bilateral and multilateral processes on non-proliferation and disarmament. His words were followed by significant action in the form of Security Council resolution 1887, as well as the Treaty between the Russian Federation and the United States of America on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (New START Treaty). It is part of a global push: a growing momentum to achieve non-proliferation and disarmament.

This momentum was evident in the 2009 entry into force of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone Treaty (Pelindaba Treaty), which further extends the reach of nuclear-weapon-free zones in the southern hemisphere. It was also evident at the 2010 NPT Review Conference and in the resulting action plan that emphasized the need to apply the principles of irreversibility, verifiability and transparency.

The high-level visits this week by representatives of Canada, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Thailand and the United States, and from the Asia-Pacific alone, our region, show that member and observer States see this Conference as an institution crucial to driving this momentum.

Australia believes that this global push represents and presents us with a unique opportunity: to make our common goal of a world free of nuclear weapons become a reality. Australia wants to see this Conference working again and negotiating multilateral disarmament treaties. That is why we are here, for no other reason. I discussed strategies as to how we could do this with the Secretary-General of the United Nations and my counterparts last September in New York, and what I say now is “carpe diem”: let us seize the day.

Australia has been an active and committed member of the Conference on Disarmament, working with others to find solutions. We helped accelerate the conclusion of a Chemical Weapons Convention. We helped ensure that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) was opened for signature. Right now, Australia is frustrated with the impasse at this Conference, but we remain active and committed to finding solutions.

Australia has heeded the call by the Secretary-General of the United Nations for a new way of thinking at this Conference. We have just co-hosted, with our close partners Japan, an experts’ side event to foster technical discussions relevant to an FMCT. As you know, it was chaired by Ambassador Woolcott, our Ambassador here in Geneva, assisted by a Swiss expert, Mr. Bruno Pellaud, and brought together experts and diplomats from Conference on Disarmament member and observer States.

This was a modest but pragmatic response to the impasse on launching FMCT negotiations within the Conference on Disarmament. It was not a substitute for those negotiations, but rather an opportunity for States to identify and consider key issues that will need to be resolved in the negotiation process when the negotiations begin. It was an opportunity to converse, and we should not forgo or dismiss opportunities to talk substantively.

Australia and Japan plan to host another event in the coming weeks to keep the dialogue flowing on an FMCT, so that we can further support the work of this Conference. It is our hope that such meetings will build the confidence and the momentum required to kick-start negotiations.

Australia's commitment to the Conference on Disarmament extends to all of its key issues. We in Australia are proud of our strong record in promoting global engagement on nuclear disarmament and on non-proliferation. We consider the NPT to be the cornerstone of global non-proliferation and disarmament efforts.

In 2008, we established the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament with Japan. We did so to outline a road map for future arms control and non-proliferation efforts. It was a road map that helped shape the conceptual framework for the negotiations at the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

More recently, Australia and Japan cooperated with a number of States in a new cross-regional non-proliferation and disarmament initiative. This initiative takes its mandate from the 2010 NPT Review Conference and is explicitly dedicated to the implementation of the Conference consensus-based action plan. That is why we are doing it, for no other reason.

Australia supports the provision of negative security assurances, and we would welcome stronger assurances, with fewer caveats, from nuclear-weapon States. Australia recognizes that space presents shared challenges as well as shared opportunities. We appreciate that it has come to play a central role in the international economy and in international security. We support a rules-based approach that will protect and benefit all nations.

Nevertheless, for Australia, negotiation of an FMCT is our highest priority. We are unapologetic about this commitment. We believe stopping the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons is fundamental to nuclear disarmament. By capping the amount of fissile material available for nuclear weapons, an FMCT would provide an essential step towards irreversible nuclear disarmament. In addition, an FMCT would further tighten the controls on fissile material and complement the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. The CTBT impedes development of nuclear weapons by prohibiting testing; an FMCT would impose a quantitative limit on the amount of fissile material available for weapons purposes.

An FMCT is not an end in itself, but a means to a greater end – a world free of nuclear weapons. We can leave no greater legacy than reducing the risk of nuclear weapons for future generations. Ahead of a conclusion of a treaty, Australia calls on all nuclear-weapon States, as well as all States outside the NPT, to preserve or implement a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.

Australia is not alone on an FMCT. President Obama and President Hu recently reiterated their support for the early commencement of FMCT negotiations. The 2010 NPT Review Conference also reaffirmed "the urgent necessity of negotiating ... a non-discriminatory, multilateral, internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices". Differences of opinion in the Conference on Disarmament should not prevent us from commencing negotiations. We say these differences of opinions are the very point of negotiating.

Australia believes that there will only be a small window of opportunity to capitalize on the goodwill among countries on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation initiatives. The challenges we face will not be solved quickly, nor will they be solved easily. They will not be overcome without the firm commitment of all member States, but we in Australia are optimistic and we refuse to succumb to fear, we refuse to succumb to inertia.

More than 50 years ago, another United States President, John Fitzgerald Kennedy, offered some words on this question of fear in his inaugural address. If his words cannot be carved into the stone above the entrance to this chamber, they should be carved in the

minds and hearts of those who are here to fulfil the purpose of this important Conference. He said: "Let us never negotiate out of fear. But let us never fear to negotiate."

Mr. President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Mr. Minister, for your historic comments and messages and proposals concerning the future work of this Conference. We shall suspend the meeting for a couple of minutes while I escort the Minister from the room.

The meeting was suspended at 11.25 a.m. and resumed at 11.28 a.m.

Mr. President (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour for this Conference to receive the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Slovenia, H.E. Samuel Žbogar. Minister, your presence here today in this Conference bears witness to the contribution your country is making to the unilateral system of disarmament and non-proliferation. I offer you the floor, Sir.

Mr. Žbogar (Slovenia): Mr. President, allow me to begin by congratulating you on the assumption of duties as President of the Conference on Disarmament. I also would like to express our full support for your endeavours to effectively lead the Conference on Disarmament – a single international forum set up for the purpose of disarmament negotiations.

I would also like to thank your fellow Presidents during the current session for their joint efforts and wish them every success in putting the Conference on Disarmament back on track.

I would like to underline once again my personal support for the initiative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to convene the high-level meeting on revitalizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament and taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations in New York in September 2010. We are convinced that his initiative came at the right time to start a new process, and that it is perhaps the only way forward to end the present deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament. It will also strengthen other international disarmament machinery within the United Nations system.

The current impasse does not contribute to the strengthening of international peace and security, which is the main task of the United Nations. In this regard, we expect the follow-up process to the high-level meeting to deliver results that will help the international community to move forward. We also expect this initiative to be followed up in a concrete manner at the next session of the First Committee of the General Assembly later this year.

In this respect, we see many countries present in this room today that expressed their wish to convene a fourth special session of the General Assembly on disarmament. Slovenia believes that the two processes, i.e. the process started by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the initiative to convene the special session on disarmament, should be compatible. In our view, the two emerging processes should be complementary and inclusive, paving the way for the same objective – revitalization of negotiations on disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

In a broader context, we sincerely welcome the renewed momentum in global disarmament and non-proliferation, as illustrated by the New START Treaty, and the results of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. We are pleased that agreement has been reached on a way forward for the implementation of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference resolution on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

The entry into force of the Convention on Cluster Munitions was the most important event in the field of conventional weapons, and it proves that there is still enough political will to address properly the relevant challenges. Slovenia was among the first countries to

ratify this Convention and was actively engaged in preparing for the First Meeting of States Parties in Vientiane in 2010.

Such successful outcomes clearly show that, with sufficient political will, we can adapt to the constantly evolving environment. We call upon members of the Conference on Disarmament to follow this path in order to ensure international peace and stability.

In this regard, let me underline the importance of the concepts of human security, post-conflict rehabilitation and development in the field of disarmament. Slovenia is actively pursuing these goals and values, which are also very high on the agenda of our candidature for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council for 2012–2013.

Allow me to reiterate our long-standing view that the 2009 programme of work of the Conference on Disarmament is a credible way forward in the revitalization of the Conference.

We remain convinced that FMCT negotiations should start as soon as possible, concurrently with full discussions on the remaining three core items of the Conference on Disarmament agenda. In this context, we welcome the efforts of some members of the Conference to launch informal preparatory discussions for future negotiations.

We believe that the issue of expanding the Conference on Disarmament, which was established in 1979 as the sole international forum for disarmament negotiations, deserves more attention of the Conference. More than a decade has elapsed since the last expansion in 1996; therefore we believe that this issue should be addressed comprehensively and in an appropriate manner. Today, more than ever, the expansion of the Conference is imminent and could be part of the solution rather than contributing to the problem. The expansion of the Conference should also be regarded as part of its revitalization process and would, in our view, enrich its life and work.

The proposal to appoint a Conference on Disarmament special rapporteur for membership expansion, which — as I understand — has already been informally discussed in the Conference on Disarmament, is a welcome step in the right direction.

I would like to stress once again that Slovenia remains determined to contribute actively to progress in the fields of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

Let me conclude by saying that the Conference on Disarmament is necessary and relevant. This is why I would like to appeal to all present here today to revive the famous “Geneva spirit” and get the Conference back on track.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Mr. Minister, for your kind words to the Chair and for the ideas you kindly shared with this Conference. We will suspend the meeting for a few moments.

The meeting was suspended at 11.33 a.m. and resumed at 11.35 a.m.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour for the Conference to welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Thailand, His Excellency Kasit Piromya. Minister, we are grateful for your participation in the Conference, and we are also grateful for your country’s contributions to disarmament and non-proliferation. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. Piromya (Thailand): It is a great honour for the Thai delegation to address such an important forum as the Conference on Disarmament in our national capacity. On behalf of my delegation, I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to you, Mr. President, and the five other Presidents of the 2011 session of the Conference. I wish to assure you of Thailand’s full support and cooperation in your efforts to take the work of the Conference forward at this important and challenging juncture.

Disarmament is part and parcel of international peace, security and stability, and of the well-being of people from all countries. It is a complex issue involving political factors and different security outlooks and concerns. Achieving disarmament therefore requires strong political will, continued determination, flexibility and the concerted efforts of all countries, especially arms-producing and arms-exporting countries.

Disarmament is aimed at promoting global peace and security. It is a means to an end and not an end in itself. It is therefore in the best interests of all countries to advance global disarmament efforts and to work together to build a safer and more secure world. In order for disarmament to occur and be effective, there must be parallel and complementing efforts to the political will, such as trust and confidence-building measures and the continued promotion of dialogue among all of us. We must all work with one another to create an atmosphere that is conducive to disarmament.

The Conference on Disarmament was created to serve as a key forum for negotiating multilateral disarmament treaties. The international community, therefore, has high expectations of this important body. It is, however, regrettable that there has been a long gap between the latest achievement of the Conference on Disarmament — which is the conclusion of CTBT negotiations in 1996 — and the present time. Over the past 14 years, there has not been any progress: substantive work and critical issues on its agenda have been left unresolved. This stagnation must not be allowed to continue. It is incumbent upon all of us, especially member States of the Conference on Disarmament, to revive and give life to this forum following its long inactivity.

I recall my participation in the high-level meeting on revitalizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament and taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations, chaired by the Secretary-General of the United Nations on 24 September 2010 in New York, where I was honoured to deliver a statement on behalf of the informal group of observer States to the Conference on Disarmament. At the high-level meeting, common concerns were voiced over the lack of progress in the substantive work of the Conference on Disarmament. Many countries also demonstrated their political commitment to revitalizing the Conference on Disarmament. There was also a strong desire from States Members of the United Nations, both members and non-members of the Conference on Disarmament, to move forward multilateral disarmament negotiations. I would therefore encourage the Conference on Disarmament to follow up on the high-level meeting in terms of concrete actions.

Although Thailand is not a member of the Conference on Disarmament, we share the aspiration in seeing progress made. The continued stalemate in the work of the Conference on Disarmament endangers its credibility. Questions have been raised with regard to its relevance to the fast-evolving international security environment. The apparent deadlock and the current situation in the Conference on Disarmament are, without any doubt, contrary to recent positive developments in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons had their first successful review conference in 10 years with the adoption by consensus of the Final Document, which includes recommended concrete follow-up actions. We have also seen encouraging progress in nuclear disarmament, as the New START Treaty between Russia and the United States recently came into force.

These positive developments should be able to give political impetus to the Conference on Disarmament, and emphasize the need for Conference on Disarmament members to commence the substantive work of the Conference and conduct multilateral disarmament negotiations, as mandated by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. It is time for the Conference on Disarmament to turn this encouraging momentum into practical measures and achieve concrete results. Thailand therefore joins others in urging Conference on Disarmament members to exercise flexibility

and demonstrate their strong political will and commitment to allow the Conference on Disarmament to adopt its programme of work and start substantive work on the core issues of the Conference on Disarmament.

As a nuclear-weapon-free world has long been a common goal of the global community, Thailand recognizes that four of the core issues currently before the Conference on Disarmament — fissile material, nuclear disarmament, prevention of an arms race in outer space and negative security assurances — are among the key elements for achieving such a noble goal. This further underscores the need for the Conference on Disarmament to revive itself and get its substantive work done. We hope that the Conference on Disarmament will intensify its efforts to address the concerns of its members equally, so that it will finally overcome the present stalemate and be able to reach consensus on a programme of work. This great responsibility lies with each of the Conference on Disarmament members.

Thailand is a small country which shares a common interest for a safer and more secure world. We recognize the role we can play in promoting global disarmament and the non-proliferation regime.

As an observer State, Thailand has been following closely the past achievements of the Conference on Disarmament with great interest. We are willing to engage more in the work of the Conference on Disarmament and are keen to work with its member States in any way we can to contribute to its activities and reinvigorate our collective efforts in the field of disarmament. As Thailand attaches importance to the contributions from civil society in general, we also look forward to the greater participation of civil society in the Conference on Disarmament in the future.

Since disarmament involves the security of all countries, they should have the right to participate in the discussion and negotiating process on an equal basis. The interest in participating in the work of the Conference on Disarmament is shared by many countries outside the Conference, which led to the creation of the informal group of observer States to the Conference on Disarmament last year. The informal group is composed of States from different geographical regions. We share the same belief that the negotiating process in the Conference on Disarmament should be more inclusive, transparent and engage all stakeholders, given the universal and extensive impact of the outcomes of the negotiations within the Conference on Disarmament.

Thailand therefore wishes to reiterate the call made on behalf of that group at the high-level meeting to address seriously the issue of the expansion of its membership and to appoint a special coordinator on expansion of the membership of the Conference. The issue of expansion was also clearly reflected in the Chair's summary of the high-level meeting. We appreciate the positive support from many Conference on Disarmament members on this important issue and look forward to their continued support this year. It is our hope that a special coordinator will be appointed during the 2011 session. Meanwhile, we wish to emphasize that such an appointment is a means for beginning discussion on this issue. It should not be seen as a prejudgement of any outcome.

As mentioned earlier, Thailand recognizes the need for the Conference on Disarmament to commence its substantive work as soon as possible. Therefore, our call for the appointment of a special coordinator and discussion on the issue of expansion should not be misinterpreted as distracting the Conference on Disarmament from its substantive work. We believe that the Conference on Disarmament can be pursued in parallel, and that the expansion of the membership is aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of the work of the Conference, not hampering it.

In conclusion, I wish all Conference on Disarmament members a successful outcome for the 2011 session and I look forward to hearing positive news on the work of the Conference on Disarmament soon.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Mr. Minister, and thank you for your kind words to this year's Presidents and for your comments. We will suspend the meeting for a few minutes so that I can escort the Minister.

The meeting was suspended at 11.45 a.m. and resumed at 11.47 a.m.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour for this Conference to welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, His Excellency Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla. Minister, we thank you for joining the Conference today because it demonstrates Cuba's interest in contributing to the work of this forum. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): The United Nations was set up after 60 million people died in the Second World War, with a view to preserving future generations from the scourge of war. The first resolution of the General Assembly, dated 24 January 1946, specifically asked for the establishment of a commission to study the problems raised by the discovery of atomic energy, and in operative paragraph 5, it called for the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and of all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction.

Sixty-five years later, serious and imminent dangers threaten the existence of mankind. The degradation of living conditions throughout the world as a result of global warming, and the existence of nuclear weapons, are the main challenges for the survival of the human race. The use of only a tiny part of the world's huge nuclear arsenal, the explosion of 100 warheads, would create a nuclear winter.

The only guarantee that nuclear weapons cannot be used by States or anyone will be their elimination and absolute prohibition, which should also cover advanced conventional weapons of similar lethal force. The only solution is general and complete disarmament under strict international control.

There must be a halt to political manipulation concerning non-proliferation, based on double standards and political interests, on the existence of a club of privileged parties which continue to refine nuclear weapons while they try to violate the inalienable right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy by countries of the South.

An end must be put once and for all to the concept of nuclear deterrence as the foundation for unsustainable and unacceptable military doctrines which, far from contributing to nuclear disarmament, encourage the possession of such weapons in perpetuity.

The States Members of the United Nations, from the first special session on disarmament in 1978, gave a mandate to this forum to negotiate multilateral treaties on the subject. This Conference has failed to fulfil this mandate with respect to nuclear disarmament. It has also failed to comply with article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which clearly lays down an obligation to negotiate nuclear disarmament in good faith.

We urge the United States, the main nuclear Power, to stop opposing the negotiation of binding agreements which would allow us finally to rid ourselves of the nuclear threat within a predetermined period.

To make progress on this task the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries has submitted a proposal which deserves attention and which sets out a plan of action that lays down a specific timetable for the gradual reduction of nuclear weapons up to their total elimination and prohibition by 2025 at the latest. It also includes the establishment of

nuclear-weapon-free zones. It urges that one such should be established in the Middle East, where Israel is the only country opposing this. Achieving this would mean a real contribution to remove threats of conflict and nuclear proliferation and bring about lasting peace in that region, which is going through a time of convulsion and facing the threat of an intervention by NATO in Libya.

Cuba supports the adoption of a programme of work in the Conference on Disarmament, and has said on various occasions that it is prepared to negotiate in parallel a treaty which eliminates and prohibits nuclear weapons, a treaty prohibiting the arms race in outer space, a treaty providing effective security assurances for States which, like Cuba, do not possess nuclear weapons, and a treaty which prohibits the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

The Conference on Disarmament has the capacity to embark on such negotiations with one voice. What is lacking is the necessary political will to bring this about.

The negotiation of a treaty prohibiting the production of fissile material is a positive but insufficient measure unless there is a plan and clear commitments on the stages which will complement this measure – that is, if the subsequent steps to bring about nuclear disarmament are not defined.

In order to preserve peace, we must eradicate everything which threatens it. It is unacceptable that in today's world more and more is spent on means of making war and less on promoting the right to development. Over the last 10 years, military expenditure has grown by 49 per cent, reaching the astronomical figure of \$1.5 trillion.

With the resources now devoted to weapons, it would be possible to combat the extreme poverty now affecting 1.4 billion people throughout the world, to feed the more than 1,020 million hungry people in the world, to prevent the deaths of the 11 million children who die each year from hunger and preventable illnesses, or to teach the 759 million illiterate adults to read and write.

This Conference on Disarmament, if it were to fulfil its mandate, could make an important contribution to change the status quo, which is of benefit only to the powerful. We must start our work with the utmost urgency and insist on respect for the right of human beings and peoples to live in peace in a world without nuclear weapons.

We have a duty to contribute to building a different world order based on human solidarity and justice, where the solution to conflicts is based on dialogue and cooperation, putting an end to the philosophy of plunder, which leads to war and the use of force.

Given the serious dangers threatening us, let us set aside what opposes or divides us, and let us unite to save peace, the planet and the life of future generations. Cuba will take the Chair of the Conference on Disarmament this year, inspired by these objectives and with the firm determination that this important forum should not lose its relevance because of resistance to change and lack of political will.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Mr. Minister, thank you for your comments. We will suspend the meeting for a couple of minutes in order to wait for the Minister from Bangladesh.

I would ask you to be kind enough to wait for about five or seven minutes because the Minister from Bangladesh is just finishing his statement to the Human Rights Council. Unfortunately we have not been able to find the Minister from Korea, so we have to wait about five or eight minutes. Thank you very much.

The meeting was suspended at 11.59 a.m. and resumed at 12.23 p.m.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour for the Conference to welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh, Ms. Dipu Moni. We are pleased at your presence here in the Conference once again, Madam Minister, and we also appreciate Bangladesh's work during the presidency. Bangladesh has contributed and, we are sure, will continue to contribute to the work of this forum. You have the floor, Madam.

Ms. Moni (Bangladesh): Mr. President, it is indeed a great honour for me to address the Conference on Disarmament once again. Let me express my deep appreciation to the Chilean presidency for steering the work of this Conference efficiently.

I addressed this Conference one year ago during the presidency of Bangladesh of this sole multilateral disarmament forum. Hopes were running high at that time that the Conference would soon be able to begin its substantive work. Unfortunately, those hopes have waned, as the Conference is still unable to adopt a programme of work. We remain concerned that, despite efforts made by successive presidencies, the consensus to begin substantive work continues to elude the Conference on Disarmament. We keep talking, but we fall short of acting, and when we feel motivated to act, finding common ground becomes more challenging.

However, this does not mean we should give up hope. We see a number of positive developments even if they are outside this Conference. The initiatives taken by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to advance the goals of multilateral arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament are indeed encouraging. I believe that implementation of the recommendations and suggested follow-up actions of the high-level meeting in New York can also contribute in bringing the Conference back into action.

We are encouraged by the ratification of the New START Treaty between the United States and Russia. However, as a country unequivocally committed to complete and general disarmament, Bangladesh believes that the world's largest nuclear weapon possessors should be more forthcoming for a deeper cut of their nuclear arsenals.

Bangladesh notes that in the 2010 United States Nuclear Posture Review, the United States committed explicitly to placing non-nuclear-weapon States that are in compliance with the NPT off-limits for nuclear attack. Although declaratory, we think this doctrine is a step in the right direction.

As a responsible and contributing member of the international community, Bangladesh has time and again demonstrated its unflinching commitment to the maintenance of global peace and security. We are convinced that armaments are not part of the solution towards attaining a secure and peaceful world. Bangladesh supports all initiatives that may lead towards the ultimate goal of Global Zero – the phased, verified elimination of all nuclear weapons worldwide.

Bangladesh attaches high priority to negative security assurances. We believe that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Pending this ultimate goal, non-nuclear-weapon States have the legitimate right to receive security assurances from nuclear-weapon States. We therefore urge the Conference towards early negotiation of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on negative security assurances. We consider that the Conference on Disarmament is the most appropriate forum for such negotiations, since it has all nuclear-weapon States as members.

Bangladesh supports negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other explosive devices. We believe that such a treaty should be non-discriminatory, multilateral, internationally and effectively verifiable and should include all existing stockpiles. We have discerned an inclination towards exploring alternative avenues for such a treaty outside this Conference. We believe that the

Conference on Disarmament, which has all nuclear-weapon-possessing States as members, is the right platform for addressing this issue.

We share the view that outer space is the common heritage of mankind. It must be explored for peaceful purposes only. We support all international efforts to prevent an arms race in outer space.

Bangladesh supports the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various parts of the world. However, we believe that this solution may not be applicable to every region, including ours in South Asia. We therefore consider the idea as an interim step, pending the conclusion of a global instrument that would offer a comprehensive security assurance.

Bangladesh subscribes to the view that the Conference on Disarmament should be receptive to global voices for disarmament. It should create space for civil society and NGOs working for peace and development. They can bring in additional perspectives and ideas that might enrich the work of the Conference.

We see added value in advancing the goals of disarmament and non-proliferation. With so many development challenges retarding our economic and social advancement, we need to spend less on armament and divert the dividend to development, especially when the amounts needed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are only a fraction of current global military spending. According to a World Bank estimate, between US\$ 40 billion and US\$ 60 billion per year over the next five years would enable us to achieve the MDGs. This represents only 3 to 4 per cent of annual global military spending.

We cannot afford to continue to deploy such huge resources for armament when our people remain hungry and unemployed, vulnerable to disease, climate change and natural disasters, and cannot afford essential services.

Bangladesh firmly believes that disarmament and development are inversely reinforcing. As a country with a categorical constitutional commitment towards general and complete disarmament, the credentials of Bangladesh in terms of disarmament and non-proliferation are impeccable. We have been at the forefront of South Asia in adherence to almost all multilateral disarmament treaties, including the NPT, the CTBT, the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, the CWC and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and their additional protocols.

We have been witnessing a time when profound changes are sweeping across the globe. People's aspirations for freedom and democracy are finding expression despite all odds. This trend will only strengthen in a networked world. At this critical hour, this Conference needs to make headway towards solutions for the sake of world peace and prosperity. The members of the Conference on Disarmament should engage in good faith, demonstrate strong commitment and flexibility and make substantive progress towards realizing the objectives of the Conference.

Let me conclude with three specific suggestions. There should be structured discussions on all four core issues, eventually resulting in negotiations. The President of the Conference may make efforts to build on the consultations held in recent months and guide the Conference towards formal discussions. Engagement at the highest political level should be strengthened. Technical discussions alone, without the necessary political commitment, will not lead to solutions. The Secretary-General should continue his efforts to create a conducive environment that might facilitate reaching consensus in the Conference.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Madam Minister, for your kind words to the Chair and for your views and suggestions. We will now suspend the meeting for a couple of minutes before hearing the last speaker this morning, the Minister from Korea.

The meeting was suspended at 12.32 p.m. and resumed at 12.35 p.m.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour for this Conference to welcome the Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Republic of Korea, His Excellency Min Dong-seok. Mr. Vice-Minister, your participation in the Conference today highlights the contribution your country has made and is making to the multilateral system of disarmament and non-proliferation. I invite you to address the Conference. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. Min (Republic of Korea): Mr. President, I am pleased to join you today at the first session of the Conference on Disarmament for this year, which is the most critical period. As an ardent supporter of multilateral efforts towards disarmament and non-proliferation, the Republic of Korea would like to extend its congratulations to Ambassador Pedro Oyarce of Chile and the other five Presidents on their assumption of the very challenging yet vital presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I assure you of my Government's full support and cooperation throughout this year.

Over the last few years, the world has seen significant progress in the disarmament and non-proliferation arena. In April 2010, the Nuclear Security Summit was held in Washington, D.C. World leaders gathered at the Summit to share their understanding of the gravity of the threat of nuclear terrorism and the need to reduce this threat through enhanced nuclear security.

One month later, countries from around the world convened at the 2010 NPT Review Conference to discuss ways to strengthen the Non-Proliferation Treaty regime. The Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference was successfully adopted by consensus for the first time in a decade. In our view, the Document condensed the goals and wishes of all the countries into 64 actions for five years until the next review Conference in 2015.

Following such progress in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, last month, the monumental New START Treaty between the two major nuclear-weapon States entered into force, and added to the global momentum towards a world free of nuclear weapons. The Republic of Korea considers this a meaningful cornerstone in the disarmament arena and appreciates the efforts made by the two countries.

Against this backdrop, the Republic of Korea will host the next nuclear security summit in 2012. I believe that the summit will be a great opportunity to highlight the threats of nuclear terrorism, demonstrate the achievements made by the international community and provide direction for a better and safer world.

Nuclear security is an issue that requires the common efforts of all the countries in the world. As a non-nuclear-weapon State with an active civilian nuclear programme which is in full compliance with non-proliferation obligations, the Republic of Korea has much to contribute to the global efforts to prevent nuclear terrorism and enhance nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

For decades, the Conference on Disarmament has undoubtedly served as the world's sole multilateral negotiating forum, giving birth to milestones such as the CWC, the BWC, the CCW and the CTBT, as we continue our journey to a world free of weapons of mass destruction. However, owing to its dormancy, which has lasted more than a decade, the Conference now seems to be falling behind recent developments in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. We have observed that concerns have been repeated by many delegations this year as well. It is clear that the patience of the international community is running out.

Against this backdrop, we once again emphasize that it is time to revive the Conference on Disarmament mechanism and to proceed with tangible results. The world

expects the Conference to set a new landmark for the next step on the road map of disarmament. We recall that at the high-level meeting in New York in September 2010, ministers from all over the world suggested that the Conference on Disarmament should adopt a programme of work and promptly embark on substantive discussions in 2011.

In the Conference on Disarmament, we have enough potential to jump-start our discussions based on the 2009 programme of work (CD/1864). In addition, to date, many ideas have been suggested to break the stalemate, such as the target date for the normal functioning of the Conference and the flexible application of the consensus rule in its procedure. Along with such internal efforts to revitalize the Conference, there has also been outside support: the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters has been reviewing all the available options, including the possible establishment of a high-level panel of eminent persons. What is now really needed for the Conference on Disarmament process is not an endless debate, but action.

The Republic of Korea is of the opinion that the international community shares the common view that, among all the issues before the Conference on Disarmament, a treaty banning the production of fissile materials for weapons is the most ripe and urgent for negotiation. The negotiation of an FMCT is indispensable not only for nuclear non-proliferation, but also for nuclear disarmament.

An FMCT would be the next logical step towards a world free of nuclear weapons, along with the entry into force of the CTBT in the future. An FMCT and the CTBT are of vital importance to the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime in both symbolic and substantive terms. In this vein, the Shannon mandate on the verifiable fissile material cut-off treaty could serve as a good starting point for FMCT negotiations.

Once we start FMCT negotiations, we can rest assured that the momentum will lead to further discussions on other major issues, such as nuclear disarmament, prevention of an arms race in outer space and negative security assurances, in a comprehensive and balanced way.

I would like to take this opportunity to address the North Korean nuclear issue. Indeed, North Korea's disregard for the international community's repeated calls for denuclearization has been long-standing and blatant. Over the years, North Korea has announced its withdrawal from the NPT and conducted two nuclear tests. In November 2010, North Korea revealed that it had built and was running a uranium enrichment facility. This is a clear violation of the relevant Security Council resolutions 1718 and 1874. It is regrettable that to date, North Korea has not displayed any willingness to abandon its nuclear programmes.

The Republic of Korea remains committed to realizing the denuclearization of North Korea in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner. To that end, we are making efforts on two levels: while faithfully implementing the relevant Security Council resolutions to send a firm message that the international community will not simply stand by the pursuit of nuclear weapons, we are leaving the door to dialogue open, by creating the appropriate conditions for the resumption of the Six-Party Talks. We want substantive progress in denuclearization once the Six-Party Talks resume, not the Six-Party Talks per se. That is why we are urging North Korea to demonstrate first of all a sincere commitment towards denuclearization through its actions. Until North Korea makes it absolutely clear that it is sincere about denuclearization, the international community must speak with one voice to end the pursuit of nuclear weapons by the country once and for all.

Once again, I sincerely hope that the Conference on Disarmament will reach consensus on the programme of work, enabling it to embark on substantive negotiations as soon as possible. I would like to emphasize that we are all in the same boat. The world is

waiting for us to break the stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament with a sense of collective wisdom and responsibility.

Mr. President, we hope that your leadership will guide us well.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much, Mr. Vice-Minister. I would also like to thank you for your kind words to the Chair and to all this year's Presidents. We are grateful for your comments and hope to see you again here some time in the Conference.

We will suspend the meeting for a couple of minutes so that I can escort the Minister from the room.

The meeting was suspended at 12.48 p.m. and resumed at 12.50 p.m.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Before concluding this morning's meeting I have received a request for the floor from Ambassador So of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. You have the floor, Mr. Ambassador.

Mr. So (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Mr. President, actually, I had no intention of taking the floor this morning, at the last minute. However, the representative of South Korea has asked me to take the floor.

Speaking honestly, the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea categorically rejects the allegation made in the speech by the representative of South Korea – it was a serious provocation. His reference does not help the work of the Conference on Disarmament at all; it is contrary to the expectations of all delegations. The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has no doubt that South Korea is well aware of what the essence of the nuclear issue is and what has to be done and how to resolve it in a way that will ensure the peace and security of the Korean peninsula and the region.

South Korea is also aware why all kinds of dialogues are deadlocked and destroyed. The nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula should be settled between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States of America, since it is a product of the hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea by the United States. South Korea does not know its position, namely that it has no right to intervene in this case, and it is talking about the issue in this forum. South Korea is making a fuss about this issue while failing to say anything to the United States. South Korea should also bear in mind that the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula is one that should be dealt with between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States.

In short, recently the Democratic People's Republic of Korea formally proposed an unconditional and early opening of the talks between the authorities of North and South Korea for settling the crisis situation prevailing in Korea as early as possible. In response, South Korea and the United States defied this proposal by conducting a joint military exercise. Everyone here knows that they began the military exercise Key Resolve/Foal Eagle 2011 yesterday. The joint military exercise will go on for more than 10 days against my country. They have again started this kind of deep provocation against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that will bring the situation to the brink of war. The present situation on the Korean peninsula reminds us once again of the dangerous nature of the current ceasefire mechanism and the time-pressing need to set up a peace treaty between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States, but the United States is still refusing to do so.

Mr. President, I will not take up too much time, but my delegation takes this opportunity to reserve the right to revert to this issue at a later stage in order to clarify fully its position pertaining to the current situation on the Korean peninsula.

Mr. President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Mr. Ambassador. This brings us to the end of our work this morning, and the next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held today at 3 p.m.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.