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Official Records

Disarmament Commission

323rd meeting

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New York

Chair: Mr. Román-Morey (Peru)

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Organization of work

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): This morning lengthy informal debates were held in an attempt to reach an agreement. Unfortunately, we were unable to reach such an agreement. We therefore decided that this afternoon we would start the general debate, as long as no delegations request that extra time be set aside to continue informal negotiations. If no such request is made, I would like to begin the general debate.

I would like to repeat once more that I am fully committed to finding consensus on our agenda.

Thus we have the option, whenever any delegation or group of delegations wishes to do so, of re-establishing the informal discussion groups on our work.

General debate (*continued*)

Ms. Mercier-Jurgensen (France) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I should like, Sir, to convey to you congratulations on the part of my delegation on your election to the chairmanship of this session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) and for the tireless efforts that you have been making for several weeks now and particularly in recent days. I should like also to thank the President of the General Assembly, His Excellency Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, and Ms. Angela Kane, High Representative

for Disarmament Affairs. I wish to commend her on her appointment to her post.

I should now like to touch on a number of aspects pertaining to the French position.

We are on the threshold of a new three-year cycle. France strongly hopes that this cycle and in particular this year's session will be useful and feed into the new dynamic that has characterized the efforts of the international community in that respect for nearly two years now, as evidenced by the successful outcome of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons; the entry into force of the Oslo Convention on Cluster Munitions and of the New Start agreement; the positive outcome of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention; the progress made at the Seoul Nuclear Security Summit; and the progress made in the context of the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty. All of those successes make clear the fact that we can make progress in the areas of disarmament and non-proliferation when openness and a constructive state of mind prevail.

This new dynamism also shows that the quest for a more secure world must be addressed in a comprehensive, balanced and concrete manner. Mobilization remains necessary in all areas — nuclear, biological, chemical, conventional, ballistic proliferation and space. France believes that such a comprehensive approach should

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lie at the very heart of our discussions during this new cycle.

Our first task, therefore, is clearly to agree on an agenda for this cycle. The approach that you have suggested, Mr. Chair, which consists of two agenda items, is useful and constructive. We would also like to thank those delegations that have submitted constructive proposals, to which we are receptive.

We must also ensure that we benefit further from the role of the UNDC as a think tank by giving it more time for discussions and reflection, so as to promote greater agreement among members.

I should now like to come back to the context within which this new three-year cycle is being launched.

In the nuclear field, our road map is without a doubt the action plan that was adopted by consensus in 2010, at the last NPT Review Conference. The adoption of that plan was our collective success; the implementation thereof is our shared responsibility. As another new cycle is beginning — that of the 2015 NPT Review Conference — each State party must play its assigned role so as to progress towards achieving a safer world.

The five permanent members of the Security Council stand ready to assume their responsibilities in that regard. France organized the first follow-up meeting to the NPT Review Conference of the permanent five last June. That initiative is testimony to France's commitment to making further progress and highlights the resolve of the permanent five to continue the implementation of tangible actions aimed at ensuring full compliance with the commitments that they have undertaken under the NPT.

We must also further strengthen the multilateral framework by encouraging all States that have not yet done so, and annex 2 States in particular, to speedily ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. In that regard, we welcome the ratification of the Treaty by Indonesia, an annex 2 country, and by Guatemala.

We must also immediately begin negotiations within the Conference on Disarmament on a fissile material cut-off treaty. Such negotiations must be conducted with the participation of all concerned stakeholders. We also call on all States affected to immediately impose a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, as France has done.

All States must contribute to disarmament by creating the necessary security environment. Above all,

that means putting an end to proliferation, and here I am thinking in particular of North Korea and Iran. France is continuing to make strong efforts in all forums in order to help avert and reduce that serious threat to international security. Strengthening the non-proliferation regime in that regard is an absolute priority, as are the further strengthening of the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards and the generalization of the Additional Protocol.

In addition, France supports the efforts that have been made for the implementation of resolution 1995 (2011), on the Middle East. The 2010 NPT Review Conference made it possible to take significant steps forward. The appointment last fall of a facilitator, Mr. Laajava, and the designation of a host country are positive steps in that regard. We all must work together to ensure that the Conference can take place in 2012, as planned.

As I underscored previously, France is working hard in all areas that can contribute to general and complete disarmament. We welcome the successful outcome of the seventh Review Conference of the Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention last December, which made it possible to further strengthen that regime, and we invite all those States that have not yet done so to endorse that Convention.

Moreover, France has supported, in particular on the occasion of its presidency of the Group of Eight last year, all of the concrete efforts made to combat the proliferation of ballistic missiles. That issue is a matter of grave concern to the international community, given the increased development of ballistic programmes in recent years, including under the pretext of space programmes, as we have seen from recent events.

That brings me to conventional disarmament. France welcomes the positive and constructive atmosphere that has prevailed in our work to date concerning the negotiations on an arms trade treaty. The adoption of the rules of procedure in the context of the work of the last Preparatory Committee will allow us to begin the Conference in July under good conditions and to devote ourselves fully to discussions of substantive matters. Between now and July, France will continue its efforts in a spirit of cooperation and transparency.

In that same vein, we hope that further efforts will be devoted to the issue of small arms and light weapons, as their illicit trafficking and excessive accumulation has an impact on international security and stability and

fuels the armed violence that is hampering development in many countries.

We have participated in a constructive manner in the work of the Preparatory Committee for the Second Review Conference on the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, which just came to a close, and we hope that the Conference, to be held in August and September, will have a positive outcome that will enhance and strengthen the implementation of that instrument.

These undertakings demonstrate what we can accomplish not just in a distant future but in the months and years to come in order to collectively forge a safer world. We hope that our discussions during this session and in the course of this cycle will reflect the challenges before us. Mr. Chair, you can count on my delegation's support and constructive participation in that debate.

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to thank the representative of France for the positive message that she has conveyed regarding the progress that has been made in terms of international security.

Mrs. Ledesma Hernández (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the delegation of Cuba, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and the other members of the Bureau on your election to guide our work at this session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. Cuba fully supports the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), and of Chile on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), respectively.

The lack of agreement on items on the agenda of the Disarmament Commission for its upcoming cycle is not an isolated phenomenon for that entity. It is not a mere coincidence that we continue to adopt dozens of relevant resolutions concerning disarmament in the General Assembly, which are simply not put into effect, or that the Conference on Disarmament has also spent far too many years without beginning substantive negotiations. We hope that the lack of political will, which without a doubt has had an impact on the work of this Commission, will not prevent us from reaching agreement on a substantive agenda for the upcoming cycle of our deliberations. We hope, too, that we will be able to adopt concrete recommendations to guide our work in the General Assembly.

Cuba supports the optimization of the United Nations disarmament machinery, including the

Disarmament Commission. However, we do not agree with those delegations that question the relevance of the Commission or ascribe the lack of concrete results to the inefficacy of its working methods. Those working methods, while they certainly can be improved, are not the real obstacles that we face. Allow me to underscore the importance and relevance of the Disarmament Commission as the only specialized deliberative body within the multilateral disarmament machinery of the United Nations.

In recent years, the multilateral disarmament agenda has given rise to no significant progress, and the Disarmament Commission has not been spared that reality. It is worrying that the Commission has been unable to attain concrete results for a number of years. It is advantageous for all of us to be able to draw on the input of a body with universal membership, such as the Disarmament Commission, which allows us to carry out in-depth deliberations on extremely relevant matters.

However, that is not sufficient in itself. Our mandate not only provides for deliberation, but also calls on us to issue concrete recommendations. It would therefore be a failure on the part of the Commission and a sign of the lack of commitment to disarmament if the countries gathered here today were unable to summon sufficient resolve to attain concrete results. We believe that the possibility of changing the status quo and of taking steps forward is in our hands.

Cuba reiterates its full support for the proposals submitted by NAM regarding the Commission's agenda items for the upcoming cycle, in particular with regard to nuclear disarmament. The lack of agreement on the item "Elements of a draft declaration of the 2010s as the fourth disarmament decade" is an example of the lack of political will to make progress in the area of disarmament.

We believe that we can achieve results in the course of our deliberations or discussions on the subject based on the progress that has been made in past years. The declaration of a fourth decade of disarmament could make a positive contribution towards mobilizing international efforts to respond to new and emerging threats in the field of disarmament. Undoubtedly that would help to promote multilateralism as the fundamental principle for negotiations in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation in all its aspects.

With regard to the first item on the agenda of the Commission, we reiterate our full support for the historic

position of the Non-Aligned Movement, affirming that nuclear disarmament is and must remain the highest priority in the area of disarmament. The relevance of nuclear disarmament cannot be ignored or downplayed in any way. Nuclear-weapon States are legally obligated not only to enter into, but also to conclude negotiations aimed at achieving complete nuclear disarmament under a strict and effective international verification and monitoring system.

For my country, the deterioration of the living standards on the planet as the result of global warming and the existence of nuclear weapons are the two main challenges to the survival of humankind. The explosion of a mere 100 nuclear warheads — a tiny fraction of the global nuclear arsenal — would lead to a nuclear winter. The only guarantee that nuclear weapons could not be used by States or anybody else would be their elimination and absolute prohibition. We must put an end to political manipulation regarding non-proliferation, based on the application of double standards and the existence of a privileged club of members who continue to update their nuclear weapons while seeking to question the undeniable right of countries of the South to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. The nuclear deterrent doctrine, which instead of promoting nuclear disarmament encourages the perpetual possession of nuclear weapons, must be set aside once and for all.

Cuba is ready to engage in parallel negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a treaty eliminating and prohibiting nuclear weapons, a treaty prohibiting the arms race in outer space, a treaty providing effective security safeguards for non-nuclear-weapon States, and a treaty prohibiting the production of fissile material for the manufacture of nuclear weapons. We believe that negotiations on a treaty on fissile material would be a positive but insufficient measure unless the subsequent steps to be taken in order to achieve nuclear disarmament are defined.

We are in favour of the priority conclusion of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on security safeguards for non-nuclear-weapon States. The Non-Aligned Movement has submitted a proposal that deserves consideration and provides for a plan of action that would identify a specific timeline for the phased destruction of nuclear weapons, leading to their total elimination and prohibition by 2025 at the latest.

In May 2011, at its sixteenth ministerial conference held in Bali, NAM adopted a declaration on the total elimination of nuclear weapons, wherein we reiterated

our commitment to working towards the convening of an international conference to determine the ways and means of eliminating nuclear weapons. On 3 December 2011, the CELAC summit adopted a special communiqué concerning the total elimination of nuclear weapons, reaffirming the importance of complete and verifiable nuclear disarmament as a matter of highest priority. The mere existence of nuclear weapons and the doctrines that provide for their possession and use pose a serious threat to international peace and security. Therefore, nuclear disarmament is and must remain the highest priority in the area of disarmament.

With regard to the item on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons, Cuba supports such measures as a way to strengthen international peace and security, so long as they fully respect the principles and objectives of the Charter of the United Nations. Given their voluntary nature, confidence-building measures cannot be imposed or applied in a one-size-fits-all manner.

As a truly effective confidence-building measure, Cuba proposes the immediate establishment of a United Nations fund that would receive at least half of the current worldwide military expenditures in order to address the economic and social development needs of countries requiring assistance. If we reach agreement on agenda items for the upcoming cycle of the Disarmament Commission and include confidence-building measures therein, taking into account the priority of conventional weapons in the Disarmament Commission's agenda this year, that issue could be raised at later point in the cycle.

In order to preserve peace, anything that threatens it must be eliminated. It is unacceptable that throughout the world increasing amounts of money are being spent on waging war and less is spent on promoting development. Over the past 10 years, military expenditures have increased by more than 49 per cent, exceeding the astronomical figure of \$1.6 trillion. The resources currently being used for armaments could be used to combat extreme poverty, which today affects more than 1.4 billion people worldwide; to feed the more than 1 billion hungry people on the planet; to prevent the deaths of the 11 million children who die every year as a result of malnutrition or preventable diseases; or to teach the 259 million illiterate adults to read and write.

In conclusion, Cuba is of the view that the Disarmament Commission has relevant issues before it to consider. We hope that all Member States will show

the necessary political resolve and flexibility to reach agreements and concrete recommendations.

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Cuba, above all for once again underscoring the relevance of the Disarmament Commission as the sole deliberative forum on disarmament, the importance of nuclear disarmament and the danger that those weapons pose to humankind. As she said, it is a matter that is in our hands.

Mr. Kvarnström (Sweden): Let me open by reiterating the full support of the Swedish delegation for your work, Sir, as well as mine in my capacity as Vice-Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). Let me commend you again for your inexhaustible efforts to move us closer to an agenda.

The UNDC was created with a mandate to be a deliberative body where discussions would lead to recommendations that the General Assembly could then consider. It was never meant to be a negotiating forum, but the way the Commission has been working has not reflected that basic fact. The UNDC has sometimes been described as the think tank of the disarmament machinery, but such a description presupposes that some constructive thinking ought to actually emerge from our deliberations.

It is in our view deeply regrettable that a form tasked with delivering recommendations has failed to do so for 12 years and at a high annual cost. That is why Sweden, along with many others, has insisted that it is time that we have a discussion on how we go about our business and how our work relates to the role envisaged for the UNDC in the disarmament machinery. We look forward to such a discussion, whether it be as a working group or in the plenary, because we see it as an opportunity for the forum as a whole to come together and consider how we can better make a contribution to solving the central problems of global disarmament and non-proliferation.

I wish to stress here that we have a joint responsibility for this forum and an obligation to the United Nations and to global opinion to find a more constructive way to work. For that reason, Sweden intends to present some thoughts on this topic for the consideration by partners ahead of the three-year cycle.

We firmly believe it to be within the remit of the UNDC itself to discuss its own methods and how it addresses its mandates, notwithstanding calls for a special session to address the disarmament machinery

as a whole. Our discussions this week have shown with only too much clarity just how hard it is for us to make progress even on basic issues. We think that that fact demonstrates further the need for reform.

The problem of paralysis is of course not exclusive to the UNDC but rather characterizes much of the disarmament machinery, perhaps nowhere more obviously than at the Conference on Disarmament (CD). Sweden is among all of those who feel deep frustration over that deadlock, which has been going on for much too long. We still believe that the CD ought in principle to be the best place for multilateral disarmament negotiations, even if it may not be the only one at all times or under all circumstances.

Of the issues on the CD's agenda on which we want to see substantive negotiations, the fissile material cut-off treaty is to us the foremost. We need to put a legal cap on the production of fissile material for weapons purposes and to deal appropriately with previously produced stocks. The main objective must be to begin substantial negotiations, since the treaty on fissile material is in our view an essential stepping stone towards the goal of global zero. Having said that, Sweden remains prepared to move forward as well on the other core issues before the Conference on Disarmament.

In our discussions on an agenda for the UNDC and in deliberating on working methods, we must not forget the reasons why we are here in the first place and why the UNDC exists. Almost 70 years since the indiscriminate and devastating effect of nuclear weapons was shown for the first time, the continuing role of such weapons in security doctrines remains a central security challenge. According to a global zero estimate, the world's de facto nuclear Powers are likely to spend a mind-boggling \$1 trillion on these weapons of mass destruction in the coming decade. Sweden has long been an advocate of efforts to prevent the further spread of nuclear weapons and to condemn current possessors of nuclear weapons to reduce and eventually eliminate their nuclear arsenals. Our overarching goal is a world free of nuclear weapons, as well as any other weapons of mass destruction.

That will not be achieved in the short term, but important disarmament and non-proliferation steps could and should be taken now. Sweden, together with Mexico, has taken on a special role in promoting the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) as one of the coordinating States of the article XIV process to facilitate the entry into force of the CTBT. We therefore

take today's opportunity to urge all States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the CTBT without delay.

The system of safeguards promulgated by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is fundamental to the nuclear non-proliferation regime and to the implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Sweden encourages all States that have not yet done so to conclude and bring into force an additional protocol without delay. Together, the additional protocol and the comprehensive safeguards agreement constitute a robust and effective safeguards system that should be considered as the current verification standard.

The international community continues to be confronted with major proliferation challenges, in particular but not limited to Iran and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We continue to be gravely concerned about the persistent failure of those countries to comply with their international obligations under the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the IAEA Board of Governors, and we urge them to comply with those obligations and cooperate with the IAEA without delay.

Sweden has worked actively for number of years to advance cooperation and multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle. We look forward to continuing discussions in a non-discriminatory and transparent manner.

On the conventional side, the illicit spread of arms causes massive destruction and human tragedy on a daily basis, endangering both security and development. In data cited by the United Nations Development Programme, of the approximately 740,000 people who die each year as a result of armed violence, 500,000 are fatalities related to situations of violence other than armed conflicts, essentially related to the use of small arms and light weapons.

We look forward to a successful diplomatic conference on an arms trade treaty to take place in July, leading to a strong and robust treaty that enjoys the support of the international community and that can be signed by as many States as possible. Later in 2012, we also hope that the Review Conference on Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects will be concrete and forward-looking in reviewing the implementation of that important agreement thus far.

In conclusion, I want to frame the difficult discussions we are having this week on our agenda and even on individual sentences in the larger picture of the grave security and humanitarian challenges I have just referred to. I hope that we can work together to find a way for the UNDC to be part of the solution and not part of the problem.

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Sweden and Vice-Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission for reminding us why the Commission continues to operate, especially with respect to security matters and humanitarian affairs.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The long-established traditions and impressive capacity of our forum to produce recommendations to the General Assembly give us significant opportunities not only to address but to prevent the current international security challenges. We are starting a new three-year cycle of the Commission's work. All States will need to work intensively. In this connection, I would like to focus on the priorities of the Russian Federation.

The Russian Federation, as a major nuclear Power, reaffirms its commitment and obligations under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Russian President Dmitry Medvedev has established a long-term strategic objective for our foreign policy, which is to build a world free of nuclear weapons. We therefore resolve to move consistently towards this goal. An important milestone in the nuclear disarmament process was the new START agreement. Its implementation enhances international security and stability, helps strengthen the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and makes nuclear disarmament more comprehensive. Both the Russian Federation and the United States will work hard in order to implement it.

We are involved in an unprecedented exchange of notifications, and we conduct inspection activity in line with the Treaty's provisions. To date, we are generally satisfied with the progress in the implementation of START. We are open to discussing further steps towards nuclear reductions. However, in our view, we must create an international environment conducive to these ends. The Russian Federation and the United States are not the only States that bear the burden of nuclear responsibility. Against the backdrop of a significant bilateral reduction in nuclear capabilities, the need to expand the nuclear disarmament process and make it multilateral is becoming increasingly apparent.

We are convinced that it would be wrong to limit the nuclear arms reduction process solely to the efforts of the NPT States parties. All countries with military nuclear capabilities should also engage in the disarmament process.

In our opinion, the achievement of the noble goal of completely eliminating nuclear weapons will be possible only through a complex phased approach, maintaining strategic stability and strictly adhering to the principle of equal and indivisible security for all. In current conditions, further nuclear arms reduction will be impossible without due consideration of all factors of international security that could have a negative impact on strategic stability. These factors include the accelerated and unrestricted development of a global missile defence system, plans to implement the concept of a prompt global strike, lack of substantive progress in the ratification of the CTBT, unwillingness to ban the placement of weapons in outer space, and qualitative and quantitative conventional arms imbalances.

The inextricable link between strategic offensive and defensive arms has been axiomatic for Russia and the United States for many years. Military experts and politicians from both countries have always assumed that an imbalance in this area would be fraught with disastrous consequences for international security and strategic stability. That is precisely why it is once again clearly indicated in the preamble to the New START agreement that there is an interrelation between strategic offensive arms and missile defence. At the current stage of significant reductions in strategic arms, the issue of missile defence system deployment should be approached in an even more balanced way.

The complexity of solving all these problems is apparent. However, there is no alternative — the painstaking work of all interested States is required in order to make progress in this direction.

Of ongoing relevance is Russia's initiative to establish, on the basis of the 1987 Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles, a universal legal regime aimed at eliminating intermediate- and shorter-range missiles, returning all nuclear arsenals to the national territories of States owning them, and destroying the infrastructure necessary for their deployment abroad.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime and international security. Contemporary risks and threats to the global regime, including regional challenges, should be addressed solely on the basis of the NPT. Lately, a number of measures have been taken to strengthen the non-proliferation regime and, in particular, the Treaty. The decisions taken at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT are a reliable benchmark for further efforts. They are based on a clear balance of the three NPT components: non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

We note with satisfaction our preparedness for the Treaty review process, to be launched with the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference in Vienna, to be held in April and May. It is now important to continue the work on the implementation of the decisions taken at the 2010 NPT Review Conference and on possible steps to reinforce the Treaty. In this regard, we have a list of priorities that, if properly set out, will in our opinion help us at the 2015 NPT Review Conference to agree on yet another package of mutually beneficial measures aimed at strengthening the non-proliferation regime. In particular, it is necessary to ensure that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty comes into force as soon as possible. We strongly urge all States, primarily those on which the CTBT entry into force depends, to sign and/or ratify it without delay.

We also believe it essential to continue to jointly support the approach adopted by the international community towards the progressive development of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards system and the universalization of the safeguards agreement and its additional protocol as a recognized standard of verification of States' compliance with their non-proliferation obligations and a basic prerequisite for nuclear export control.

We note that the international community attaches increasing importance to reliable mechanisms for addressing risks and threats that could emerge if sensitive materials and technologies were to fall into the hands of non-State actors. International cooperation on ensuring the security of nuclear facilities and countering nuclear trafficking plays a strategic role. Joint efforts are needed to contribute to the universalization of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. We stress the importance of the

Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism and the development of best practices for nuclear material identification and nuclear forensics. All these efforts deserve targeted support, which might be provided, *inter alia*, through our forum.

We highlight the important role of such instruments as the 1980 Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and its Amendment, adopted in 2005. We urge those States that have not yet done so to ratify the Amendment to the Convention as soon as possible.

We are pursuing efforts in support of establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones throughout the world. Russia actively supports States' activities aimed at establishing such zones. On 20 March 2011, Russia ratified the Protocols to the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty.

The implementation of the 1995 resolution on the establishment of a zone free from nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery in the Middle East will remain our short-term priority. Following the decisions of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, the depositaries of the Treaty — Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States, together with the Secretary-General and in consultation with countries of the Middle East — have achieved significant progress in the preparations for the 2012 conference on the issue of establishing in the region a zone free from nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. We believe that the main factor for the success of the 2012 conference will be ensuring the participation in the forum of all countries of the Middle East region.

Our joint efforts with the States members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and other permanent five partners have promoted significant progress in the establishment of an international legal framework for a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South-East Asia with a view to signing the relevant protocol to the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone by all five relevant nuclear-weapon States in the nearest future.

An important outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference was the identification of best ways to ensure unhindered access by all NPT States parties to the benefits of the peaceful use of nuclear energy. There is a growing global awareness of the fact that the exercise of the legitimate interests of many countries in this area requires a modern, proliferation-resistant architecture of international cooperation on the peaceful

uses of nuclear energy, which should be based on rigid mechanisms to monitor non-proliferation obligations and on multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle that can offer a feasible alternative to the development by States in their own territory of the nuclear fuel cycle elements that are costly and sensitive in terms of non-proliferation.

It is important in that regard to set the right direction for moving forward. To that end, Russia has opened an international uranium enrichment centre in Angarsk and created a low-enriched uranium reserve under IAEA management that can be used by any State that complies with its non-proliferation obligations. It is important that countries in need of long-term fuel supplies for their nuclear power plants have a variety of options and confidence in their future.

The Fukushima power plant disaster in Japan demonstrated the need to strengthen the international legal framework to ensure that atomic energy facilities are safely constructed and operated. In that regard, in 2011 the Russian Federation launched initiatives to amend the Convention on Nuclear Safety and the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident, as well as to strengthen IAEA nuclear safety standards. We are convinced that the speedy adoption of our proposals would help to avoid or minimize the negative effects of future nuclear accidents.

In order to keep the international security agenda moving in a positive direction, we must ensure that the multilateral disarmament mechanisms are fully functioning.

Russia is concerned about the situation at the Conference on Disarmament. We regret that, despite their determined efforts, member States have failed to reach an agreement on a programme of work or to resume negotiations. We believe it important to preserve the Conference as a leading multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In our view, any initiative to hold negotiations on Conference issues in alternative forums is counterproductive. We are ready for further consultations in order to reach a compromise on the Conference's programme of work that would be acceptable to all.

Preventing the placement of weapons in outer space remains one of Russia's foreign policy priorities. We still believe that the best way to achieve this goal today is to conclude a treaty banning the placement of

weapons in outer space; the basic provisions of such a treaty, contained in Russia and China's draft text, are supported by most of the international community. It is high time that we held a substantive discussion of that treaty in the framework of the Conference on Disarmament. We urge that the work of that important international disarmament forum be resumed as soon as possible.

An important element of our efforts to prevent the placement of weapons in outer space is establishing transparency and confidence-building measures in the area of outer space activity. The United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on such measures will begin work this year. We hope that the experts will build on existing research, with the active support of other interested States, and by the end of next year present the international community with a final document that will help establish rules of conduct for States in outer space.

We welcome the successful outcome of the Seventh Review Conference of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and the adoption of its substantive final document (BWC/CONF.VII/7), which includes an ambitious plan of action for the intersessional period ahead. We intend to take an active part in implementing the decisions adopted at the Review Conference in order to further strengthen the regulations prohibiting biological and toxin weapons.

Russia is committed to the thorough modernization of the conventional arms control regime in Europe without preconditions or reservations. We believe that a viable agreement on conventional arms control in Europe should reflect the balanced interests of all parties. It should respond to current realities on the continent, prevent the overwhelming military superiority of any one party, not restrict deployment of weapons or military equipment within national territories, help prevent an arms race, and establish an inspection regime that is a minimum requirement for the reliable verification of compliance with quantitative limits on weapons.

The Russian Federation shares the concerns of the international community and supports the continuing consolidation, under United Nations auspices, of all international efforts to counter the uncontrolled proliferation of small arms and light weapons. In that context, we attach great importance to the United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, scheduled for

August and September. We intend to take an active part in its work. We hope that the Conference will make a practical contribution to solving the acute and pressing issue of illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons.

Regarding the issues of transparency that this raises, we assume that the main task of the related mechanisms, including the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, is to trace and identify destabilizing stockpiles of conventional arms in order to ensure stability and international security. We acknowledge the importance of the technical aspects of transparency mechanisms, such as expanding and adding greater detail to weapons categories. Nonetheless, we believe that priority should be given to their political benefit as a confidence-building measure that encourages dialogue among States and takes account of their concerns about destabilizing stockpiles of arms.

The Conference on an International Arms Trade Treaty, scheduled for July, will be one of the most important events on this year's agenda. We are approaching it at a difficult moment, in which there is a vast range of opinions on what a future treaty dealing with the conventional arms trade should look like. We believe that, if the Conference is to have positive results, we must focus on the basic elements of a viable document. Above all, that means reaching agreement on its goals and objectives and addressing other aspects, particularly its scope and parameters, later.

For our part, we are convinced that the main goal should be combating the illicit traffic in arms. It is precisely such illicit trade that presents an urgent problem for the entire international community and a source of immense human suffering. We believe the principles of inclusion and consensus-based decision-making to be particularly important in the process of devising an arms trade treaty. We would like to see our collective work result in a genuinely powerful and effective document that addresses specific problems and is based on the highest international standards.

The main task before our forum is to help solve our most urgent problems of disarmament and non-proliferation. The Russian delegation is ready to cooperate constructively with all interested States in order to find mutually acceptable solutions.

Mr. Mahmoud (Egypt): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your unanimous election to preside over this year's session of the United Nations

Disarmament Commission (UNDC). I am confident that, under your able guidance and leadership, the 2012 UNDC session will fulfil the mandate entrusted to it by the General Assembly. I would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election.

My delegation associates itself with the statements made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the African Group, delivered by the representatives of Indonesia and Nigeria, respectively.

It is undeniable that the Commission has faced difficult times in the past few years. Despite the Commission's lack of progress since the adoption in 1999 of guidelines for establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones and conventional arms control, Egypt still believes in the importance of the UNDC as the specialized and deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery, permitting in-depth deliberations on specific disarmament issues that can result in concrete recommendations to the General Assembly. But for that to be successful, we need the political will to achieve an agreed vision of the Commission's future activities. In the absence of such political will, the Commission often encounters disagreements among members over policies and priorities. This is clearly reflected in the fact that the Commission has been unable to agree on its agenda items for the three-year cycle of 2012-2014.

Egypt believes that the Commission must therefore pursue a middle course between shared concerns, on the one hand, and joint aspirations, on the other. Although the UNDC dealt with the subject of its methods of work in 2006 and 2009, those discussions did not yield sufficient measures to allow it to officially fulfil its mandate. It was clear in those discussions that the UNDC's problems are not related to its methods of work, but rather confirm that the main obstacle is the stalemate in various disarmament forums that results from the lack of political will on the part of some Member States to achieve any progress on nuclear disarmament matters.

The question is really how to mobilize the political will necessary to address the threats and challenges in the disarmament field, particularly in the context of nuclear disarmament issues.

The Non-Aligned Movement, which Egypt currently chairs, considers that nuclear disarmament should remain the top priority. Egypt had therefore expected that the success of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear

Weapons would help the UNDC and the Conference on Disarmament (CD) to achieve more substantive outcomes. There is much in the way of commitments in the four action plans adopted by the 2010 NPT Review Conference that should be translated into further agreements. Those commitments should have also given rise to greater political will to advance, at the global level, the ambitious nuclear disarmament and proliferation agenda reflected in the four action plans.

The fourth action plan of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, focused on the implementation of the resolution on the Middle East adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference, is another case at hand. We appreciate the continuous efforts of the Secretary-General, the sponsors of the 1995 resolution, the Government of Finland and the facilitator, Mr. Jaakko Laajava, working in close consultation and coordination with the States of the region, towards the successful convening of the 2012 conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

Accordingly, Egypt reaffirms that the letter and the spirit of the four action plans adopted by the 2010 NPT Review Conference should provide sufficient guidance during the current session of the UNDC. That requires that the UNDC issue concrete recommendations on effective measures to be taken by the nuclear-weapon States to fulfil the implementation of the obligations they undertook in the 2010 action plans.

In order to get closer to our joint goal of a world free of nuclear weapons, the UNDC should always avoid ambiguity in identifying its agenda items and concentrate its deliberations on an issue that leaves no room for different interpretations, namely, effective measures to follow up on the unanimous conclusion of the International Court of Justice that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament. Moreover, we should also address the issue of effective measures to prevent the emergence of new types of weapons of mass destruction.

Regrettably, we are still witnessing efforts aimed at giving priority to non-proliferation without achieving parallel progress in nuclear disarmament. We also note that some illusory and baseless linkages have been made between realizing non-proliferation and limiting the inalienable right of non-nuclear-weapon States to benefit from the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. That represents a challenge to the principles of the NPT and

to the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency in the field of nuclear verification, and thus should be avoided in our deliberations.

Within the framework of the overarching issue proposed by the Non-Aligned Movement, which concerns recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, we should strive to hold more focused deliberations on nuclear disarmament issues.

Egypt is of the view that conventional weapons already have sufficient priority in this year's disarmament agenda. Our preference was thus to deal with conventional weapons during the UNDC sessions to be held in the next two years.

Any deliberations on conventional arms must focus on the importance, and even centrality, of existing structures in the framework of the United Nations. Furthermore, any discussions on this issue must be in accordance with the relevant principles of the United Nations Charter, especially the right of States to manufacture, import and retain conventional arms for purposes of their legitimate self-defence, and not permit the undermining of that right in any context.

In conclusion, I would like to assure you, Sir, that the Egyptian delegation is fully committed to the successful conclusion of the work of the Commission, to achieve the noble objective of general and complete disarmament.

Mr. Langeland (Norway): Sir, my delegation joins others in welcoming you as Chair of this year's session of the Disarmament Commission (UNDC). My delegation appreciates the transparent manner in which you have guided our informal preparatory consultations and our consultations so far.

There has been considerable interest among Member States in this year's session of the Commission. That interest comes as a result of a genuine concern among Member States about the state of affairs in the multilateral disarmament machinery.

Indeed, much of the attention of the First Committee last fall was devoted to the question of how to revitalize multilateral approaches to arms control. It therefore makes sense that the UNDC should devote time to exploring and deliberating on that topic. At a minimum, we should be able to take a closer look at the functioning of the UNDC itself.

It is also regrettable that valuable time is being lost in our endeavour to agree on the agenda for this session. Indeed, the UNDC is a deliberative forum and not a negotiating body. The last thing we need is to import into the UNDC the difficulties that exist in other parts of the machinery. We could and should do better.

Some affirm that the current standstill in multilateral disarmament is due to a lack of political will. It may be so, but that should make it even more imperative to make full use of the Commission to deliberate on matters on which the views of Member States differ and to consider ways of overcoming those differences.

My delegation would, however, question the notion that there is a lack of political will and resolve to move forward. Two years ago, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) concluded a successful Review Conference by adopting a forward-looking action plan and a resolution on the Middle East. Despite that and other progress such as that made in the context of the New START agreement, there is a growing impatience concerning how we can rid ourselves of the most destructive and inhumane weapons ever created. Member States agree on the objective of a world free of nuclear weapons, where nuclear weapons are eliminated, and should thus make use of the UNDC to deliberate on how to achieve that objective.

The UNDC could also play a useful role in identifying ways to enhance confidence-building measures that could lead to further progress in the field of conventional weapons. Indeed, in the field of conventional arms, we have seen both political will and resolve when Member States have negotiated and adopted internationally legally binding bans against anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions.

The experience gained in the field of humanitarian disarmament demonstrates that it is possible to move forward and achieve effective multilateral treaties. The question is therefore whether multilateral disarmament bodies such as the Conference on Disarmament and our own Commission will be able to translate the political will of an overwhelming majority of States Members of the United Nations into advancing disarmament goals. The alternative is to continue the process of making these two bodies even more marginalized. Their failure to act would only increase the determination to consider other avenues in order to move forward.

We are at the beginning of a three-year cycle. My delegation does not expect that at this year's session we will be able to agree on specific recommendations, but at least let us start the conversation.

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Norway for his positive message.

Ms. Elias (Australia): Let me at the outset say how pleased Australia is that you, Sir, are leading this process. I have said before that we are very confident in your abilities, but today I also want to say that we applaud your determination and your patience, which is growing as we speak.

It shows that you are definitely the best person for the job, Mr. Chair. We very much appreciate the way that you have conducted the preparations for the Commission, and we support your approach, including that business as usual is not an option. Your approach this week has genuinely given us hope that we might be able to put the past 12 years of stalemate in the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) behind us.

I would also like to welcome Ms. Angela Kane as the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs. I thank her for her interest in being here today. We are looking forward to working closely with her over the coming years.

Australia has a long-standing commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation. Pursuing those goals in United Nations forums is a key priority for us. We are therefore committed to working with the Chair and other States to contribute to those shared goals in the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC).

Australia has a substantial history of what we trust has been active, practical engagement, offering leadership where we can, in promoting global disarmament and non-proliferation through bringing the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) to the General Assembly; through establishing the Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, and more recently the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament; through our active support for the extension and implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT); and of course, more recently, through our active support for an arms trade treaty. Our approach, as I have said, is practical and realistic, and we are focused on securing real progress. I undertake to continue that approach in the current session of the Disarmament Commission.

We also see the UNDC as important in that it can facilitate non-binding thinking on our shared nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and conventional arms limitation goals. We support a focused agenda on those two areas. We have to move on from items that have not garnered success, but we do have to reframe them. Ideally, our deliberations should and would have a positive influence on and provide food for thought for the work and negotiations in other United Nations theatres. It will not reflect well on us if we cannot do that, especially if we cannot agree on the definition of the areas for discussion.

Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are among the most pressing of the many arms control issues facing us today, which is why the UNDC must address them. We support the Chair's proposals for the agenda in that regard, and particularly the compromise solution that he proposed yesterday. Obviously, discussions have moved on in the informal dialogue. Let me be clear, and I hope I will not confuse anyone by saying that for Australia's part we want a world without nuclear weapons. We want a world free of nuclear weapons. We want total elimination of nuclear weapons. We even want a nuclear-weapon-free world. For us, those phrases mean essentially the same thing and will achieve the same goal: no nuclear weapons. Obviously, disarmament and non-proliferation are important components of that ultimate goal, and we look forward to addressing both of them in a focused way in the current cycle of the UNDC.

I said yesterday that the timing of the UNDC is important because it comes ahead of the Vienna Preparatory Committee meeting of NPT States Parties for their 2015 Review Conference. We are honoured that Australia's Ambassador for Disarmament, Mr. Peter Woolcott, will chair the first session of the current NPT review cycle. We particularly thank delegations for extending their goodwill and providing their valuable views to Ambassador Woolcott during his consultations most recently here in New York.

All States should feel proud of the NPT Review Conference in 2010, notably the adoption by States Parties of the consensus action plan, which spans the NPT's three pillars and addresses the very important matters relating to the Middle East. There is an opportunity and a responsibility to maintain the positive momentum that came out of the 2010 Review Conference and to take stock of its implementation at the Preparatory Committee. Of course, implementing

the NPT action plan is not the work of only a handful of States. All NPT States Parties have a responsibility to do what they can.

The UNDC can play a key role in fostering the right environment, clarifying the context and sharing approaches and activities for the implementation of the NPT and the 2010 action plan. Our discussions here can also look at other complementary measures for a world without nuclear weapons. Let us commit to doing that, irrespective of the wording of the agenda item.

For its part, Australia has jointly formed the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) with Canada, Chile, Germany, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Poland, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates. The NPDI is devoted to taking practical action to support implementation of the 2010 Review Conference. Among the NPDI's practical initiatives is our development of a draft standard nuclear disarmament reporting form, which we have shared with the nuclear-weapon States as a contribution to their discussions on increased transparency and accountability in nuclear disarmament.

Other priorities of the NPDI include supporting the commencement of negotiations for a treaty banning the production of fissile material, including by supporting Canada's draft resolution in the General Assembly, and providing assistance to countries towards the universalization of the additional protocol of the International Atomic Energy Agency and the CTBT.

Entry into force of the CTBT is a long-standing disarmament priority for Australia, and we congratulate Indonesia on its ratification of the Treaty. Indonesia's leadership sets an example for the eight remaining States required to ratify the CTBT before it can enter into force.

In addition to the CTBT, an internationally verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons is a vital step towards the ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. We were therefore profoundly disappointed and frustrated by the recent failure of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) once again to adopt a programme of work despite the best efforts of particular States to get things moving. That failure really drives home the need for the Disarmament Commission to take advantage of its flexible and deliberative nature and to contribute in some way to the recovery of the United Nations disarmament machinery.

Can we perhaps provide motivation for the CD to get back to work?

We also expect the Disarmament Commission agenda to enable a discussion on the important role of regional collaboration in supporting multilateral negotiations and the implementation of international obligations. Just one example is that Australia currently chairs the Asia-Pacific Safeguards Network, which is an informal network of nuclear safeguards authorities, ministries and other organizations responsible for implementing safeguards in the countries of the Asia-Pacific region. The objective of the Network is to promote safeguards and best practices. We hope that those sorts of contributions provide some of the measures required for a nuclear-free world.

Turning now to conventional weapons, we all know that, in many countries around the world, armed violence is fuelled by the availability of illicit conventional arms. Such violence takes place every day. As we speak, civilians are facing death, danger and insecurity, and are prevented from making a better life for themselves and their families because of the availability of conventional weapons. I think that the statistics that were quoted by my colleague from Sweden are telling. Our motivation should be reducing the fatalities that he mentioned in this forum.

To help redress the situation, Australia sees significant value of the Disarmament Commission discussing confidence-building measures that will support effective implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the negotiation of a strong, robust and legal binding arms trade treaty that includes small arms and light weapons and ammunition.

Those are key priorities for Australia, and we are playing an active role in building the capacity of States to implement the Programme of Action and negotiate an effective arms trade treaty (ATT). In February, Australia co-hosted with the Pacific Islands Forum secretariat a workshop to assist Pacific island countries, which produced a foundational text for a common regional position on the ATT and a common approach for the Review Conference on the programme of action.

Australia has also supported workshops in the Caribbean to support ATT preparations. The third workshop will take place in May. Australia is sponsoring a regional meeting of the African Union, from 21 to

22 May, in Addis Ababa, being organized by the African Union, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa and the International Action Network on Small Arms. Our view is that the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty provides an opportunity that cannot be missed. We need to be as prepared as we can for that opportunity so that it delivers the kind of ATT that we want and need. We call on all States to ensure that the ATT negotiations proceed in a spirit of trust and goodwill. This forum, the UNDC, has an opportunity to support this dynamic and understanding of complementary confidence-building measures.

In concluding, let me emphasize that Australia shares with all others here the simple yet important and very worthwhile goals of a world free of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction and a future for our citizens and communities that is safer from the misuse and proliferation of conventional weapons. Achieving those goals is self-evidently complex and difficult, but not impossible. We just need to act.

For the purposes of this forum, it is not really a question just of political will, but also a question of individual responsibility in this room to be constructive. Let us start by showing some flexibility on the agenda so that we can all get down to work on deliberating on the elements required to reach our common goals on nuclear and conventional weapons. We commend the flexibility of particular individuals and delegations here to find a solution over the past two days, but we call on others to reciprocate.

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank the representative of Australia for her presentation before this forum, in particular for the words addressed to the Chair, which I personally thank her for. I also thank her for the wealth of the concepts contained in her presentation. Indeed, what we need to strive for is a nuclear-weapon-free world, no matter what we call it.

Mr. Burns (United Kingdom): Let me take this opportunity once again to congratulate you, Sir, on your chairmanship and to assure you of the full support of the United Kingdom delegation.

The United Kingdom remains committed to the long-term objective of a world without nuclear weapons. We have a strong record of fulfilling our disarmament commitments and meeting our international and legal obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The United Kingdom is

committed to maintaining only a minimum credible nuclear deterrent. We have signed and ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and have ceased the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other explosive devices.

The 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT was an important milestone in our long-term vision for a world without nuclear weapons. In the NPT action plan, we now have a map to help us move forward. We are working with our international partners to capitalize on those achievements and to translate those commitments into concrete action in the years ahead.

In our October 2010 strategic defence and security review, we announced a number of significant disarmament measures. We announced, *inter alia*, that the United Kingdom will reduce the number of warheads on board each of our submarines from a maximum of 48 to 40, reduce the requirement for operationally available warheads from fewer than 160 to no more than 120, and reduce our overall nuclear weapons stockpile to not more than 180 by the mid-2020s. In June 2011, we announced that the programme for implementing those warhead reductions had commenced and that at least one of our submarines now carries a maximum of 40 nuclear warheads. Those reductions will be complete in the mid-2020s.

We also announced a new stronger security assurance that the United Kingdom will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT. That complements the other commitments the United Kingdom has made on disarmament. For example in September 2009, we hosted an unprecedented conference for the permanent five to discuss confidence-building measures towards nuclear disarmament. A follow-up permanent five conference took place in Paris in 2011. We were delighted that the Paris conference set in train a number of new confidence-building initiatives on which the permanent five will collaborate, including a working group on nuclear weapons definitions and terminology.

The United Kingdom Ministry of Defence and atomic weapons establishment has been working with Norway since 2007 on a collaborative research project to examine some of the technical issues surrounding the verification of nuclear warhead dismantlement. In December 2011, the United Kingdom co-hosted with Norway an international workshop on that pioneering nuclear disarmament research for nuclear scientists and policy experts from Egypt, Germany, Poland, Mexico,

Australia, Kazakhstan, Sweden, Japan, South Korea and the United States. British and Norwegian scientists shared the outcomes from five years of the United Kingdom/Norway initiative — a ground-breaking research project on how to verify that a nuclear weapon has been dismantled and the first time that a nuclear-weapon State and a non-nuclear-weapon State have worked together in that way.

As part of the follow-up to the Paris permanent five conference, the United Kingdom hosted on 4 April, today as it happens, a meeting of the five nuclear-weapon States to share the outcomes and lessons from the United Kingdom/Norway initiative.

We firmly believe that increasing transparency and developing the technical, military and political solutions to the practical challenges of disarmament are vital to making tangible progress towards our ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons. We look forward to working with the international community to control proliferation and to make progress on multilateral disarmament, to build trust and confidence between nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon States, and to take tangible steps towards a safer and more stable world where countries with nuclear weapons ultimately are able to relinquish them.

In that context, I must briefly touch upon the ongoing stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament (CD). The United Kingdom shares the sense of widespread frustration at the lack of movement in the CD. We are committed to the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty to constrain those countries that are still legally free to produce fissile material for use in nuclear weapons and to cap the amount of unverified fissile material available. Together with international partners, we have made it clear that any concerns States have should be addressed during substantive negotiations. The international community expects progress on nuclear disarmament, and the ability of the CD to deliver negotiations will affect its viability in the future.

Putting in place a legally binding ban on all nuclear weapon test explosions will be a key building block towards our long-term goal of a world without nuclear weapons. Promoting the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is one of the United Kingdom's key disarmament and non-proliferation priorities. We are working to build momentum towards the entry into force of the CTBT, providing United Kingdom technical expertise to build

up the international monitoring system, diplomatic assistance to help countries make the case for ratification, and financial support to help interested States pursue their own ratification.

On the subject of non-proliferation, we believe that the proliferation of weapons and materials of mass destruction to non-State actors remains a serious threat. International non-proliferation regimes and initiatives have an important role to play in combating that threat. The United Kingdom supports the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and, through national programmes and international initiatives, is working to achieve that goal. The United Kingdom is an active member of non-proliferation initiatives, including the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, the G-8 Global Partnership and the Nuclear Security Summit process.

Universal adherence to an additional protocol is fundamental to the non-proliferation regime because it provides the necessary minimum assurances that nuclear technologies are being used peacefully.

If we are to build upon the successes of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, we also need to work together on strengthening the Treaty, including in areas of non-compliance and ensuring that any benefits accrued to members are not kept if a country chooses, as is its sovereign right, to withdraw.

In the field of conventional weapons, the United Kingdom is firmly committed to securing a robust and effective legally binding arms trade treaty (ATT) in 2012 to regulate the international trade in conventional arms. We are aiming for a treaty covering all conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons and ammunition. The ATT should contain strong provisions on human rights and international humanitarian law. We also want the treaty to have wide membership and the global coverage needed to be truly effective. We are working to secure both those aims. We have now entered the crucial time for the ATT, with the negotiating Conference due to take place in July. The United Kingdom is currently working with key partners to make sure that the remaining time is used effectively.

I would like to thank the Chair for the opportunity to address the Commission today. I wish him luck in his endeavours over the coming days and once again assure him of the support of the United Kingdom delegation.

Mr. Pham Vinh Quang (Viet Nam): Let me join others in congratulating you, Mr. Chair, on your election

to chair this important substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). My delegation is confident that, under your wise guidance and experienced leadership, the Commission will achieve a successful outcome in its work. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Ms. Angela Kane on her recent appointment as High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.

Viet Nam aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The current session has begun at an important juncture where the Commission marks its sixtieth anniversary and begins a new three-year cycle of work. Over the past year, we have witnessed some positive developments in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, including the recent conclusion of Review Conferences of the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention. More international conferences and meetings related to arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation will take place in 2012, such as the first Preparatory Committee meeting for the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the United Nations Conference on an Arms Trade Treaty, and the long-awaited 2012 conference on a zone free of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. Those positive developments show a general commitment and political will in favour of pursuing the disarmament agenda.

Without denying those positive developments, we have to face the fact that the challenges remain enormous and are far from over. There still exists a nuclear stockpile capable of destroying the entire world many times over. The situation with regard to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons is undergoing new and complex developments. In the substantive sessions of the past two cycles of the UNDC, it is regrettable that the Commission failed to achieve intended results. To effectively break the deadlock, it is crucial that Member States demonstrate good faith and flexibility and redouble their efforts to reach agreement on the agenda, supporting the aims of the UNDC in the cause of disarmament, especially towards the total elimination of all weapons of mass destruction.

Due to time constraints, I wish to highlight a number of issues. First, we share the view that nuclear weapons continue to pose the most serious threat to international peace and security today, given the exceptionally

catastrophic consequences of those horrific weapons for humankind. The only absolute guarantee against nuclear war is the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

In that connection, we emphasize the need to start negotiations on these issues without further delay. The negotiations process should be based on the fundamental principles agreed at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and aimed at strengthening international peace and security, achieving the ultimate goal of the elimination of the danger of nuclear war and the implementation of measures to halt and reverse the arms race.

Secondly, Viet Nam values the role of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime. The full implementation of the Treaty in a balanced manner will safeguard the world from the potential devastation of nuclear weapons. In that regard, we urge the nuclear-weapon States to undertake the implementation of the 64 concrete actions contained in the outcome document of the 2010 Review Conference (NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. I)). We call for efforts aimed at non-proliferation to be made in tandem with efforts aimed at disarmament.

Thirdly, Viet Nam wishes to reaffirm the importance of the Conference on Disarmament (CD). We call on the CD to agree on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work as soon as possible. It is important to start negotiations on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specific time frame, as well as to prohibit the development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use of such weapons, and to provide for their destruction. Viet Nam attaches great importance to the immediate commencement and early conclusion of the negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.

Fourthly, my delegation underlines the importance of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). We are happy to note that there has been a steady increase in the number of signatory and ratifying States to the Treaty. To enable the CTBT to enter into force without further delay, we are convinced that the nuclear-weapon States should take a leading role in the field of global peace and security. Their ratification would pave the way towards that end and further encourage the remaining countries to follow suit.

Meanwhile, pending the CBTB's entry into force, all States should maintain a moratorium on nuclear weapon test explosions or any other nuclear explosions. At the same time, my delegation wishes to reiterate that the legitimate right of all States to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination should be fully respected in conformity with article IV of the Treaty and the safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

It is the consistent policy of Viet Nam to strive for peace and support the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction towards general and complete disarmament. Viet Nam has acceded to all major multilateral treaties that prohibit weapons of mass destruction and has been an active member of many United Nations disarmament bodies. In the region of South-East Asia, we are also working closely with other States members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and other partners in the implementation of the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone and its plan of action.

I assure you, Mr. Chair, that Viet Nam will fully cooperate with other Member States to bring the current session of the UNDC to a satisfactory outcome, contributing to the maintenance of world peace and security.

Mr. Bavaud (Switzerland): Mr. Chair, I would like to start by joining previous delegations in congratulating you on your election to chair the 2012 session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. I would also like to assure you, Sir, of the full support of the Swiss delegation as you undertake your task.

(spoke in French)

The United Nations Disarmament Commission is beginning a new three-year work cycle at a time when the United Nations disarmament machinery is raising serious concerns. As challenges to international security and disarmament are growing, the institutions that make up this machinery seem to be increasingly unable to fulfil our expectations of them. These failures have significant consequences and are already being felt. If no solutions are found, they will only continue to worsen.

Several reasons underlie the deadlock that has prevailed in the disarmament machinery for many years. The fact that the political will to make progress is often lacking, and where it does exist, is often not effectively capitalized upon, is certainly a significant

factor. But the lack of progress is just as much due to causes that are institutional in nature. The disarmament forums no longer appear capable of responding to the challenges they face because many of those involved give precedence to questions of national security, to the detriment of global considerations.

However, efforts to promote disarmament play an important role in strengthening human security, the protection of human rights and economic development. Restrictive approaches are no longer appropriate because, today, national interests and security in the global sense of the word can no longer be separated. In this situation, we feel that it is becoming increasingly difficult to assert that an in-depth review of the whole disarmament machinery, or of a new approach in this area, is not needed. Today, action has become necessary.

The function of the Disarmament Commission, as a specialized and deliberative forum within the United Nations disarmament mechanism, is to develop disarmament norms by submitting concrete recommendations to the General Assembly. The recommendations put forward in the past demonstrate the added value the Commission provides. However, this body has been unable to adopt such recommendations on questions of substance for over 12 years now. The added value that the Commission brings to the process of disarmament and arms control today is questionable.

In the light of this situation, we consider it imperative that the Disarmament Commission focus its attention as of this year on the way it conducts its work. In other words, it should include this question as an agenda item. At its most recent session, the General Assembly called on States to explore and consider, in the appropriate forums, options and elements for a revitalization of the United Nations disarmament apparatus within the framework of resolution 66/66, entitled "Revitalizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament and taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations". In our opinion, the Disarmament Commission fully meets the qualification of being an appropriate forum.

In the context of such an exercise, the Disarmament Commission should look in-depth at a whole series of questions. In particular, it should consider the issue of its agenda. The stalemate in the Disarmament Commission is in part related to the fact that two themes appear on its agenda: one on nuclear disarmament and the other on conventional disarmament. This creates a situation that is not very conducive to progress, as any lack of progress in one of area creates an impasse in others.

Thus, the option of adopting a single annual theme for the Commission's agenda warrants consideration.

In addition, it would be helpful to determine whether it would be more appropriate to have the agenda focus on specific, circumscribed themes rather than on generic issues such as nuclear disarmament or conventional disarmament. On this subject, we feel that it would be timely for the Disarmament Commission to focus its action on the field of nuclear disarmament, negative security assurances, nuclear-weapon-free zones or non-strategic nuclear weapons. Regarding conventional weapons, the Commission could concentrate on verification mechanisms or regional confidence-building measures.

The Disarmament Commission should also consider the possibility of opening up its proceedings to exchanges with representatives from the academic world and civil society. Greater interaction with such actors could give new impetus to the work of this body and enable it to take into account all the concerns related to disarmament issues.

Another item that warrants further attention from the Disarmament Commission concerns the submission of a report to the General Assembly that reflects exchanges of views on matters of a substantive nature. The stalemate of recent years has made the transmission of such information impossible. The possibility of the Commission's incumbent Chair submitting, in his or her own name, a report to the General Assembly that reflects the discussions and the different opinions expressed should be considered.

Of course, the various matters that I have just enumerated do not constitute an exhaustive list of the themes that warrant further attention from the Commission in the context of a review of its working procedures. Other themes will also need to be looked at.

While it is clear that the Disarmament Commission should review its own working methods, we are also convinced that it should address the issue of the United Nations disarmament machinery in its entirety. The Commission is indeed a particularly appropriate body for this task, as it brings together all the States Members of the Organization.

Therefore, the Disarmament Commission should not only examine its own case, but also that of other bodies. The Conference on Disarmament is the cornerstone of the disarmament machinery. To this day, it remains the single permanent multilateral forum for

negotiation in the field of disarmament. For this reason, it is an essential instrument for the entire community of States, whether or not they are members. Its inability over the course of 15 years to undertake any substantial work is therefore a source of concern for all the States Members of the United Nations.

In the context of this global exercise, the Disarmament Commission could also consider the respective roles of the various organs of the disarmament machinery, their interaction and the way it could possibly be improved. Finally, in the framework of this approach, the Disarmament Commission could also examine the processes that would be required to reform the existing machinery and ways of creating the conditions that would make this exercise possible.

We welcome the fact that initiatives have begun to emerge, at long last, that are aimed at tackling the stalemate in the disarmament machinery. In the light of the present situation, a multi-tiered process represents the best way to move forward.

The high-level meeting convened by the Secretary-General on 24 September 2010 represented a first milestone, and was followed by a plenary debate in the General Assembly in July 2011. The issue was also raised in the context of the First Committee during the sixty-fifth and sixty-sixth sessions of the General Assembly. As I have already mentioned, the Assembly has called, in resolution 66/66, for an exploration of the various options for a reform of the disarmament machinery.

The next step will be to assess the implementation of that resolution at the next session of the General Assembly. That evaluation will, of course, take into account the proceedings and results of the 2012 session of the Disarmament Commission. That assessment will serve as the foundation from which the General Assembly can make the decisions that are called for.

For this reason, the 2012 session of the Disarmament Commission is of particular significance. It has an important role to play in providing a response to the paralysis of the United Nations disarmament machinery. We can only encourage it to fully assume its responsibilities.

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): I am particularly grateful for the proposals that have been made, and they will be given due consideration.

Mr. Bravaco (United States of America): On behalf of the United States delegation, let me congratulate Peru on its election to the chairmanship of the 2012 session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). It is my great pleasure to be working with you again, Sir. You may count on the full support of the United States as you fulfil your important responsibilities. We also congratulate the other members of the Commission's Bureau on their election, and we warmly welcome the new High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Angela Kane, and express our gratitude for the contributions of the previous High Representative, Sergio Duarte.

As we all know, the Disarmament Commission is meeting on the eve of the first Preparatory Committee meeting for the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Please allow me to touch on some of the activities, achievements and commitments of the United States in the field of arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament.

In the 42 years since the NPT entered into force, it has become the most widely adhered to non-proliferation and disarmament agreement the world has ever known. As United States President Barack Obama said on 5 April 2009 in Prague, the basic bargain is sound: countries with nuclear weapons will move towards disarmament; countries without nuclear weapons will not acquire them; and all countries can access peaceful nuclear energy.

Working together at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, States parties achieved agreement on an ambitious and forward-looking action plan across all three pillars of the NPT. As the 2015 review process begins, the United States looks forward to working with its NPT partners to strengthen the implementation of all aspects of the Treaty and the international nuclear non-proliferation regime.

Two agreements between the United States and the Russian Federation that came into force last year serve as essential evidence of the commitment of the United States to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons. The United States-Russia Plutonium Management and Disposition Agreement will result in the disposal of enough weapons-grade plutonium for many thousands of nuclear weapons, and the New START agreement, the implementation of which is now well under way, will, we anticipate, set the stage for the pursuit of a future agreement

with Russia for broad reductions in all categories of nuclear weapons — strategic, non-strategic, deployed and non-deployed. As we consider next steps, close consultations with Russia, as well as our allies, will remain essential.

Action 5 of the 2010 NPT Review Conference outcome document action plan calls on the nuclear-weapon States to engage on further reducing nuclear weapons and diminishing their role, reducing the risk of nuclear war and enhancing transparency and mutual confidence. Building on the NPT Review Conference and the engagement initiated at the 2009 London and 2011 Paris conferences, the five permanent members of the Security Council have continued their discussions on these and other non-proliferation and disarmament issues, including reporting by the permanent five to other NPT parties on disarmament-related matters.

That process continues. The United Kingdom hosted just today a permanent five verification working group, as agreed at last year's Paris permanent five conference. The United States is pleased to be hosting this summer the next permanent five verification, transparency and confidence-building conference in Washington, D.C.

A fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) remains an absolutely essential step on the path to global nuclear disarmament, one repeatedly endorsed by the international community. The reality of the situation is simply this: the longer an effectively verifiable FMCT is delayed, or, more accurately, denied, the longer a world free of nuclear weapons will remain out of reach.

For that reason, we regret that the Conference on Disarmament (CD) did not agree to the recent compromise programme of work that would have advanced efforts towards an FMCT along with serious work on other important issues. We are disappointed at this lost opportunity, but appreciate the vigorous efforts of Egypt and the other six President of the CD countries to move this issue forward. We are currently consulting with our permanent five partners and others on the most appropriate next steps for an FMCT.

The United States also remains committed to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty as another critical element of the nuclear disarmament process. The Administration is continuing its engagement with the United States Senate and the American public on the merits of the Treaty. As we move forward with our efforts to promote ratification, we call on all Governments to declare or reaffirm their commitments

not to conduct nuclear explosive tests. We thank and congratulate Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea and Indonesia for their recent ratifications of the Treaty, and we ask all the remaining States required for the Treaty's entry into force to join us in moving towards ratification.

Over the past several years, the United States has reinvigorated its efforts to support nuclear-weapon-free-zone treaties as an important part of the multilateral arms control and non-proliferation architecture. On 2 May 2011, the Administration transmitted the relevant Protocols of the African and South Pacific nuclear-weapon-free-zone treaties to the United States Senate for its advice and consent to ratification. Also last year, the nuclear-weapon States and the States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations resolved long-standing differences related to the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Protocol language. Upon completion of some procedural steps, we hope to be able to sign the Protocol to the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone Treaty this year.

Regarding the Treaty of Semipalatinsk, in Central Asia, we have had preliminary discussions with Kazakhstan and our permanent five partners to consider ways to address outstanding issues, and, along with the other NPT depositary States, we strongly support the efforts of Finnish Under-Secretary of State Jaakko Laajava, the facilitator for the conference on a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction.

In an effort to strengthen the long-term stability, safety and security of space, the United States earlier this year announced its decision to formally work with the European Union and spacefaring nations to develop and advance an international code of conduct for outer-space activities. The European Union's draft code of conduct is a good foundation for the development of a non-legally binding international code of conduct, which, if adopted, would establish guidelines for responsible behaviour to reduce the hazards of debris-generating events and increase the transparency of operations in space to avoid the danger of collisions.

We also look forward to practical work in the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on outer-space transparency and confidence-building measures, which is scheduled to begin this summer.

Mr. Chair, as we work to finalize agreement on the Commission's agenda for the 2012-2014 issues cycle, please allow me to express my confidence in your ability to foster a compromise that takes account of the

views of all delegations. Once our agenda is agreed, the United States looks forward to addressing the issues before the Commission in the coming years and will do its part to facilitate a positive outcome.

This statement will be made available on the website of the United States Mission to the United Nations.

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of the United States for the trust that he has placed in our ability to find a solution.

Mr. Adejola (Nigeria): Nigeria joins those delegations who spoke earlier in congratulating you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the 2012 session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). My delegation is confident that your rich pool of experience will assist us in our efforts to engage in positive and constructive deliberations on disarmament and non-proliferation.

Your extensive knowledge and determination will serve us in good stead. We congratulate the members of the Bureau and the Chairs of the Working Groups, whenever they are elected. We assure them of Nigeria's support and full engagement in deliberations.

We also congratulate Ms. Angela Kane on her recent appointment as the new United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, and commend the thoughtful and insightful overview of the issues in her opening statement, particularly as they touch on the need to move the deliberations on global disarmament forward.

Nigeria associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, as well as that of the African Group, delivered by the representative of Nigeria. That said, my delegation wishes to highlight the following issues in its national capacity.

Nigeria wishes to underscore the important role of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) as a subsidiary body of the General Assembly, as well as the sole specialized deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery. It is in that context that Nigeria commends the Chair's efforts to provide a rich platform for our deliberations during the 2012 session of the UNDC, including careful consideration of the right agenda for the new cycle. In a demonstration of this, the Chair's letter of 7 March underscores the need for positive and constructive engagement on the agenda and the substantive issues for

this session and for the cycle. The letter also indicates the need to give UNDC a new lease of life in terms of its mandate. My delegation also notes the letter's useful suggestions on the measures needed to break the deadlock in the UNDC, and welcomes constructive comments and proposals on that subject from regional groups and Member States.

Nigeria wishes to reiterate the Secretary-General's message on the need for UNDC to focus its deliberations on finding common ground in order to address current and emerging global challenges, ranging from the elimination of the deadliest weapons of mass destruction to the reduction and elimination of conventional weapons. In our view, the chief obstacle is that which precludes progress on a way forward and maintains the status quo of stalemate and gridlock on nuclear disarmament deliberations. That also extends to the related issue of nuclear non-proliferation in all its aspects, including the unregulated trade in conventional weapons, as well as unfettered access to and use of illicit small arms and light weapons. We call for delegations' constructive engagement in deliberations, and we hope it will be extended in good faith.

We also welcome the call to keep deliberations based on the ethos of the UNDC, particularly for the years before 1999, and to learn from the time lost through our inability to agree on the more critical elements of disarmament measures. In view of this, my delegation calls for a renewed effort to address the twin issues of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Nigeria is manifestly committed to complying with the appropriate international instruments dealing with nuclear disarmament. Our commitment remains unwavering. As the second country to sign the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in 1968, and having voted for its indefinite extension in 1995, we believe that the world could truly address the threat of nuclear weapons and achieve the NPT's end goal through such determination. In that regard, we wish to reaffirm the importance of nuclear-weapon States applying the principles of transparency, irreversibility and verifiability in relation to nuclear disarmament measures.

My delegation reiterates the need for Africa to remain a nuclear-weapon-free zone. We support the objectives of the Pelindaba Treaty and commend its entry into force. We therefore take this opportunity to again encourage remaining States — those with reservations

and in particular those nuclear-weapon States that have not yet ratified the protocols — to do so. Nigeria also supports the call for negative security assurances to be given to non-nuclear-weapon States as a minimum commitment on the part of all nuclear-weapon States.

The work of UNDC in the field of disarmament and arms control has unquestionably been significant. My delegation fully supports the Chair's views on the usefulness of nuclear-weapon-free zones and conventional arms control. We agree that the UNDC has a critical role to play in their effectiveness, especially in the field of nuclear disarmament. We support the position of the Group of African States on the call for more flexibility, without overstepping any State's national interests.

My delegation stresses the significance of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and calls on States whose ratification for its entry into force is essential to do so without further delay. We are persuaded that such a comprehensive ban on all forms of nuclear test explosions will contribute immensely to achieving nuclear disarmament.

Let me seize this opportunity to commend your transparent leadership and initiative, Mr. Chair, particularly in your balanced approach to deliberations within the UNDC. There is no doubt that the UNDC has contributed to promoting multilateral disarmament. In that regard, my delegation wishes to stress the need to strengthen the debates within the Commission by providing a balance between the nuclear and the conventional weapons issues.

Nigeria takes cognizance of the efforts to address the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons, as well as the unregulated trade in conventional weapons, during the course of the year. Nigeria commends Member States for their commitment, participation and engagement in the Fourth Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty in February and in the Preparatory Committee for the Second Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects held in March 2012. We view the inclusion of conventional weapons in this year's UNDC agenda as indicative of our collective effort to reinforce existing measures to rid our world of the menace of illicit small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

Nigeria wishes to highlight the efforts of United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament in terms of their contributions to disarmament and future challenges. My delegation notes the valuable input of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, particularly the Centre's provision of capacity-building and technical assistance to many States on the continent. We therefore wish to stress the need to strengthen such regional centres for disarmament so they may fully discharge their mandates.

Finally, my delegation calls for sustained and meaningful dialogue as we begin debates on major issues, and we look forward to fruitful discussions aimed at achieving peace and security for all.

Mr. Rai (Nepal): Let me join previous speakers in congratulating you on your election to the Chair, Sir, and other members of the Bureau on theirs. My delegation is fully confident that your able leadership and dogged perseverance will guide the Commission's deliberations towards a successful conclusion.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Since its establishment in 1978 by the General Assembly at its first special session devoted to disarmament, the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) has succeeded in delivering many concrete results by formulating consensus principles, guidelines and recommendations on a range of issues.

However, we must not remain oblivious to the fact that the past 12 years of our deliberations in the UNDC have not developed into any concrete results. We must make considered efforts to make the Commission a truly results-oriented deliberative body. As a subsidiary body of the General Assembly, only an effective UNDC could contribute towards the noble goal of the maintenance of international peace and security with the least diversion of the world's human and economic resources to armaments, as envisaged in Article 26 of the Charter of the United Nations.

A report of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute revealed that there has been an increase of 24 per cent in the global volume of the international transfer of major conventional weapons in the period of 2007 to 2011, compared to the period of 2002 to 2006. It may be an unpleasant yet hard and mind-boggling fact for many of us that, despite the financial crisis that is affecting the entire world mercilessly, global military

spending has spiked significantly, while the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals remains grossly underfunded. It is a known fact that a small percentage of global military spending would be enough to meet all the Development Goals.

We hold the firm view that the notion of security encompasses political, economic, social and environmental aspects far beyond the traditional concept of military security. Our scarce resources and our immense potential for unending scientific inventions should be utilized to address the problems of global hunger, poverty, disease and environmental degradation.

Four decades since the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the obligation contained in its article VI for nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control at an early date continues to elude us and remains unfulfilled. We are convinced that nuclear-weapon States must lead from the front with bold steps towards that goal. We also emphasize the full implementation of the action plan adopted by the 2010 NPT Review Conference, which encompasses all three of the Treaty's pillars.

In the light of the essential role of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, it is important that it receive universal adherence, starting with ratification by all annex 2 Member States.

It is our firm belief that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones has promoted non-proliferation in various regions. In that context, the signature and ratification by nuclear-weapon States of treaties that establish nuclear-weapon-free zones is critical to give a genuine meaning to such efforts.

My delegation is optimistic that the upcoming 2012 Review Conference on small arms and light weapons will deliberate comprehensively on the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action. As the host country of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, Nepal attaches great importance to a multilateral approach to disarmament and non-proliferation. Such an approach promotes collective joint responsibility and ownership among Member States for common global action. We underline the importance of strengthening the United Nations regional centres with a view to making them an effective forum to deliberate disarmament and non-proliferation in the respective regions.

In conclusion, my delegation reiterates its strong and long-standing principled position on general and complete disarmament under effective international control within a specified time frame. Nepal has never ascribed to the view that the possession of weapons of mass destruction is a guarantee of State security. If global peace, security and prosperity are our shared objectives, we must commit ourselves to nurturing such common objectives through consensus-building. We must take responsibility for making the UNDC a truly consensus-generating body in order to submit concrete recommendations to the General Assembly.

Mr. Hashmi (Pakistan): My delegation congratulates you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). Given your vast experience, we are confident that you will guide the Commission towards optimum results. We assure you of our support and cooperation. My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

We are commencing a new three-year cycle of deliberations amid several challenges to the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime, as well as its deliberative and negotiating forums. Perceptual differences persist with regard to the ways and means of achieving the shared objectives of disarmament and non-proliferation.

The recent narrative of positive trends in the international environment appears to be giving way to old expressions of lament and cynicism. Any objective appraisal of those cyclical patterns of hope and despair would reveal that a genuinely conducive international environment in the field of disarmament emanates from actions, rather than words, and through sincere efforts, not opportunism.

In the area of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, the trajectory is negative, as evidenced, *inter alia*, by the following developments: adherence to the doctrines of nuclear use, as well as resistance by some nuclear-weapon States to forswearing nuclear weapons; the modernization of nuclear weapons; and opposition to the commencement of multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament. The negative trend is also demonstrated by developments such as violations of national and international non-proliferation obligations by some major Powers and the pursuit of selectivity, discrimination and double standards by major Powers in the area of non-proliferation for commercial

and strategic considerations. It is further seen in the accentuation of asymmetries between the major Powers and smaller States through the development of anti-ballistic missile systems at the tactical, theatre and, soon, strategic levels; the steady militarization of outer space, often in the guise of peaceful development, as well as the integration of space technologies into strategic doctrines; the build-up of conventional forces by major Powers; and the reluctance of nuclear-weapon States to provide negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States.

In the past two years, considerable debate has taken place on the need to rejuvenate the international disarmament machinery. This Commission and the Conference on Disarmament (CD) are seen by some to be underperforming. In our view, the reasons for the impasse in those bodies are self-evident. They primarily include foot-dragging by some nuclear-weapon States on the most important issue of nuclear disarmament and the conspicuous silence of their partners at such obstinacy, as well as the selective pursuit of non-proliferation and its use as a substitute for disarmament. It is therefore clear that the reasons for the lack of progress are rooted in the continued lack of political will of States and in double standards.

The Disarmament Commission has successfully developed several recommendations, including on nuclear-weapon-free zones and international arms transfer guidelines. Such recommendations were agreed under the same rules of procedure and working methods that exist today. There is nothing inherently flawed in those tools. However, the Commission, like the CD, does not operate in a void. The Commission's work, or the lack of it, reflects the prevailing realities that are marked by divergence in priorities and perceived or real betrayals of the past.

Any solution to the current stalemate in the international disarmament machinery should be comprehensive and applicable to all aspects of that machinery, not just issues that are of priority to some delegations. It should also address the real underlying causes of the stalemate. Pakistan strongly believes in the need to preserve such machinery, which has been developed through consensus. Any effort to bypass the disarmament machinery would undermine consensus and legitimacy. We would never be part of any such efforts.

Let me take this opportunity to say a few words on the assertions made with regard to the so-called

deadlock in the CD over a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT).

Let there be no mistake. This deadlock did not emerge in 2009. Consensus on FMCT negotiations has eluded the CD for 15 years. For over a decade, the major Powers did not allow any consideration of the FMCT or any other core agenda items of the CD. Now, with sufficient stocks available, the FMCT has become cost-free for some of the major Powers, and hence the mantra about it being the next logical step and a ripe issue for negotiations. And if time is any measure of judgement for ripeness or importance, the issues of nuclear disarmament and negative security assurances have been deadlocked for over two decades.

To be sure, the CD was not created to negotiate an FMCT only, as there are a number of equally, if not more important, issues on its agenda. Moreover, if there is no consensus on one issue due to the security concerns of States, other issues can and should be taken up.

In our view, any fissile material treaty should address clearly and comprehensively the issue of the asymmetry of existing fissile material stocks. Only then will it be a treaty that would contribute to nuclear disarmament, ensuring the equal security of all States. Pakistan continues to underline the importance of one of the cardinal principles of disarmament negotiations, as enshrined in the Final Document of the tenth special session of the General Assembly, which states,

“The adoption of disarmament measures should take place in such an equitable and balanced manner as to ensure the right of each State to security and to ensure that no individual State or group of States may obtain advantages over others at any stage.”
(*resolution S-10/2, para. 29*)

Pakistan, along with 120 members of NAM, is ready to support the commencement of negotiations on nuclear disarmament, an issue that has been a priority for the Movement for decades. We also support negotiating a legal instrument on negative security assurances, which has been on the CD's agenda for many years and does not compromise the security of any State. There is also an urgent need to commence work on developing a treaty towards the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Those steps are vital to ensuring the peaceful uses of outer space, on which the international community relies heavily for economic and scientific development. We look forward to the Commission's deliberations on those important subjects.

Given the existing problems besetting global security and the need to overcome the deadlock in the international disarmament machinery, the Commission can and should deliberate on both the manifestations and causes of the current stalemate in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. The Commission should seek to harmonize the differences in perspectives and modalities and evolve agreed recommendations. In that regard, Pakistan fully supports the call of NAM countries to convene the fourth special session on disarmament as a means to revive the consensus on achieving the agreed goals of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in a balanced and non-discriminatory manner, keeping in view the security interests of all States.

Mr. Sin Son Ho (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Let me begin by congratulating you, Sir, and the other countries on your election to the Chair and to the Bureau. I am fully confident that, under your able leadership, this session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) will bear a fruitful outcome. Let me also extend the warmest welcome to Ms. Angela Kane on her recent appointment as the new High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.

The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea fully associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), with a focus on nuclear disarmament as the topmost priority. Nuclear disarmament, which is directly related to world peace and security and to the very survival of humankind, remains an issue of the most pressing urgency.

Belonging to the category of most destructive of all the weapons made so far by humankind, nuclear weapons are now at the threshold of threatening the total elimination of humankind as a whole. It is very true that, under the signboard of a so-called world free of nuclear weapons, the modernization of nuclear weapons is pressing ahead towards the possibility of real wartime use in battlefields. It is also very true that missile defence system development is in a steady and phased process of expansion.

The development of missile defence systems, which completely deviates from the legally binding bilateral framework of 2002, is undermining the balance of power between nuclear Powers, thereby gradually giving way to a potential pre-emptive or first use of nuclear weapons. The development of such a critical situation speaks by itself that the danger is increasing

as days go by, whereby the policy of hegemony with the use of force or nuclear blackmails can be put into practice in more practical actions.

Since nuclear disarmament is an issue directly related to world peace and security and the survival of humankind, the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea firmly believes that the UNDC should naturally focus on discussing and drafting realistic and constructive recommendations thereon. Certain nuclear-weapon States, which are involving themselves in the modernization of nuclear weapons and missile defence system development, thereby challenging the desire of humankind for nuclear disarmament, should no longer waste time by moving forward towards a discussion on nuclear disarmament. There is a clear understanding that their ongoing adventurous behaviour will only result in a nuclear arms race and a cold war, with themselves as the political and economic victims to a great extent.

If practical steps are taken for the total elimination of nuclear weapons in a legally binding framework, as humankind desires, they will also have a very positive impact on the eventual denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. Today, the Korean peninsula is regarded to be the part of the world in the greatest danger of nuclear war.

Immediately after announcing in January its new defence strategy, which has shifted its focus to the Asia-Pacific region, the United States began driving the situation in the Korean peninsula to the brink of war by holding increasingly large-scale joint military exercises in South Korea and the vicinity. The so-called Key Resolve and Foal Eagle joint military exercises, conducted by the United States and South Korea by mobilizing over 200,000 troops, was nothing but a show of force or a demonstration of power in terms of their numbers, scale and nature. They were aimed at making pre-emptive strikes and maintaining the position of hegemony in the region by containing the neighbouring countries.

What drew particular attention was the timing of the exercises, which were started concurrently with the opening of the talks between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States, driving the situation to the brink of war by mobilizing the United States occupying troops in South Korea and by reinforcing its troops from the mainland and its military bases in the region, as well as the most sophisticated means of strike.

Since the 1950s, the United States has deployed over 1,000 nuclear weapons in South Korea in a forward position. Furthermore, under the pretext of so-called routine exercises, the United States has been conducting military exercises every year for over four decades, increasing the mobility of its troops and all different types of weapons of mass destruction, such as nuclear-powered aircraft and nuclear submarines, in South Korea.

Through that process, the United States troops have become familiar with the geography of the Korean peninsula and are already fully prepared to enter into a nuclear war at any time.

The reality speaks for itself. The United States is the primary source of the destabilization of peace and security in the Korean peninsula. The greater the frequency of the United States' moves, the closer the danger of nuclear war on the Korean peninsula, compelling the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and neighbouring countries to step up their capacity for deterrent even more.

In its new policy declaration for 2012, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea again clarified its principled position that the United States should pull its troops out of South Korea, since they represent a key obstacle to securing peace on the peninsula. The presence of United States troops in South Korea plays no role but that of imposing a continuing division on a single nation; it merely aggravates the confrontation between North and South and increases the danger of war, while showing no sign of furthering the process of reconciliation, cooperation and reunification. It is worth noting that in recent years North-South relations have become the worst they have been since the country was divided. The military exercises being held by the United States in South Korea at this critical time are seen as an encouragement to South Korea to adopt a more confrontational posture towards the North.

The denuclearization of the Korean peninsula was the lifelong aim of our late President and Great Leader Kim Il Sung. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea remains consistent in its position that peace and security can be achieved by denuclearization of the Korean peninsula through dialogue and negotiation. We demonstrated our consistency and sincerity in the agreement reached between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States in the three rounds of talks that began in 2011 and continued until this February. In those talks, the two countries, the key

parties in the Korean peninsula's nuclear issue, held in-depth discussions and agreed on issues relating to confidence-building measures for normalized relations, to peace and security on the Korean peninsula and to the Six-Party Talks.

In the view of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the talks produced positive conditions that can enable us to move forward towards denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea remains unwavering in its determination to implement the agreement in good faith; its willingness to do so has been demonstrated by its invitation to the delegation of the International Atomic Energy Agency, as agreed in the talks.

I would like to take this opportunity to clarify our principled position on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's planned launch of a satellite for peaceful purposes. The planned launch of the application satellite Kwangmyongsong-3 to mark the centenary of the birth of President Kim Il Sung is part of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's peaceful outer space activities, and its basic mission is to contribute to the country's economic development, promoting the people's welfare and developing humankind's understanding of the science of outer space. In advance of the satellite launch, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has taken practical steps to ensure safe navigation for aircraft and ships by informing the relevant international organizations and countries about the technical details, in line with international practices. Furthermore, we have shown maximum transparency by inviting experts and media representatives on an exceptional basis.

In its planned launch of the satellite, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is exercising its legitimate right as a State party to the Charter of the United Nations and the Outer Space Treaty; that legitimacy is guaranteed by those international legal instruments. Nothing can stop the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's launch of a satellite for peaceful purposes, and we will exercise our sovereign right as a sovereign State in a completely justifiable manner.

Mr. Vipul (India): I join other colleagues in congratulating you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). Let me also congratulate other members of the Bureau on their election. You can be assured of the support of the Indian delegation in carrying out your responsibilities in working towards a constructive session for the Commission this year.

My delegation would also like to thank the United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs for her interest in the work of the Commission.

India associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

India attaches great importance to the work of the Disarmament Commission as the specialized deliberative leg of the triad of United Nations disarmament machinery put in place by the first special session of the General Assembly on disarmament. With its universal membership, the Commission provides the international community with a unique platform for discussing pertinent questions, reaching common positions, bridging differences and adopting concrete recommendations of universal applicability on disarmament issues.

We share in the disappointment created by the fact that the Commission has not been able to achieve consensus on its agenda items for more than a decade. However, we should bear in mind that the Commission has had several successes in the past when it was able to adopt principles, guidelines and recommendations on specific disarmament issues. We believe that, given sufficient political will, the UNDC can play an important role in taking the multilateral disarmament agenda forward. In the most recent cycle of meetings, some progress was made on the items on the Commission's agenda, even though consensus eluded us. As we embark on a new three-year cycle of UNDC meetings, we call on all delegations to give positive impetus to global non-discriminatory disarmament.

India believes that in this new cycle of the work of the UNDC, nuclear disarmament should remain the key agenda item. India attaches the highest priority to nuclear disarmament; we remain committed to the objective of the Rajiv Gandhi action plan of 1988 and the realization of its vision of a nuclear-weapon-free world and non-violent world order. As our Prime Minister, Mr. Manmohan Singh, said in his address to the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session, the action plan sets out a "concrete road map for achieving nuclear disarmament in a time-bound, universal, non-discriminatory, phased and verifiable manner" (A/66/PV.22, p. 11).

The goal of nuclear disarmament can be achieved by a step-by-step process, underwritten by universal commitment, and by an agreed-on multilateral

framework that is global and non-discriminatory. There is need for a meaningful dialogue among all States possessing nuclear weapons in order to build trust and confidence and to reduce the salience of nuclear weapons in international affairs and security doctrines. Measures to reduce nuclear danger arising from the accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons, increasing restraints on the use of such weapons and de-alerting those weapons are essential steps. The progressive delegitimization of nuclear weapons is essential to the goal of their complete elimination.

India is committed to working with the international community to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The danger of nuclear weapons and related material falling into the hands of terrorists has made the threat more complex and dangerous. While Member States must discharge their primary responsibility to strengthen national measures related to nuclear security, it is also important to strengthen international cooperative efforts to address that critical challenge. The International Atomic Energy Agency plays a central role in that regard. India has also been an active participant in the Nuclear Security Summit process.

India subscribes to a policy of a credible minimum deterrent. We do not subscribe to any arms race, including a nuclear arms race. India has espoused a policy of no-first-use and non-use against non-nuclear-weapon States and is prepared to convert those undertakings into multilateral legal arrangements.

India has also supported the universalization of the policy of no first use in a global no-first-use treaty. We support negotiations aimed at reaching agreement on effective arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons.

India remains committed to maintaining a unilateral, voluntary moratorium on nuclear explosives testing. We are also committed to negotiating a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty to ban the future production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. Such a treaty would have to meet India's national security interests, in accordance with the mandate contained in CD/1299. We believe that the Conference on Disarmament is the appropriate forum for negotiating a fissile material cut-off treaty.

I would like to recall India's recent contributions to the debate on nuclear disarmament in the framework of the United Nations. In 2007 we presented a working paper on nuclear disarmament to the Disarmament Commission (UNDC) containing specific proposals for the consideration of the international community. Our resolutions in the First Committee of the General Assembly entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons" and "Reducing nuclear danger" are adopted with substantial support.

India supports efforts to raise public awareness so as to generate the momentum necessary for realizing the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

On the basis of the recommendations contained in the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, the last cycle of the UNDC included an agenda item entitled "Elements of a draft declaration of the 2010s as the fourth disarmament decade". Regrettably, we were not able to achieve consensus on that agenda item, despite the best efforts of the working groups. We are now in 2012, already well into the decade of the 2010s, and therefore that agenda item may look dated. However, we believe that there is still room for the UNDC to deliberate on this item in the meetings of the current cycle to see if there is a greater convergence of views and the possibility of achieving consensus. The draft declaration could provide the requisite impulse on disarmament issues in this decade and could set an aspirational disarmament agenda for the international community, keeping in mind the current global realities.

In the last two cycles of UNDC meetings as well as between 2001 and 2003, consensus eluded us on the agenda item related to conventional weapons. Although the discussions were useful and a large measure of common ground was achieved, we are ready to once again engage in deliberations on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons. India supports practical confidence-building-measure initiatives at the unilateral, bilateral, regional and global levels. Such measures can promote a stable environment of peace and security among States by building confidence and enhancing transparency. We believe that a step-by-step approach should be adopted that is respectful of the sovereign right of States to choose those confidence-building measures that are best suited to their interests.

Some delegations have expressed a desire to discuss the working methods of the UNDC at this year's meetings. We believe that this issue needs to

be approached in the light of the discussions that have already taken place in the UNDC in the past — in 1998, when the General Assembly adopted decision 52/492, and in 2006, when it adopted resolution 61/98, which included additional measures for improving the effectiveness of the UNDC's methods of work.

It is up to us Member States to put the decisions we have taken into actual practice. Discussions related to the disarmament machinery have also taken place in the General Assembly under the item entitled "Revitalizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament and taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations".

We believe that the current impasse in the multilateral disarmament machinery is not due to procedural reasons or to any deficiency in the machinery itself. Proposals that question the viability or relevance of the disarmament machinery and suggest unrealistic alternatives will not lead to productive results in taking forward the agreed multilateral agenda.

My delegation seeks to actively participate in the deliberations in the days ahead with the hope that we will be able to achieve significant results in this cycle of UNDC meetings.

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of India for the important document that was submitted, which will without a doubt contribute to the work of the Commission.

The representative of Indonesia has asked to speak in order to clarify the statement he made this morning. I give him the floor.

Mr. Cassidy (Indonesia): As you mentioned, Mr. Chair, I should like to refer to the Non-Aligned Movement statement read out by my delegation this morning.

I should like to inform the Commission that the second sentence of the eighth paragraph of that statement should read as follows:

"Pending the total elimination of such weapons, efforts for the conclusion of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on security assurances to all non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons should be pursued as a matter of urgency."

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): I would ask the representative of Indonesia to provide to the Secretariat copies of the text that he has just read out.

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Park Chul Min (Republic of Korea): I should like to speak in exercise of the right of reply in response to the remarks made by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

As always, the remarks made by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are incorrect, unfounded and unacceptable. I should like to make a few points, but before doing so, I would like to mention one very important issue in particular. The representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea called the Republic of Korea "South Korea". That is irritatingly rude and impolite, and it is totally against basic United Nations protocol. I tried to ask, through the Chair, that this situation be rectified. If North Korea insists on this manner of speaking, we will do the same.

Every country has a right to the peaceful uses of outer space, such as satellite launches and the peaceful uses of their nuclear programmes. That right is allowed and encouraged by the relevant treaties and agreements. Having said that, those rights should not and cannot be enjoyed and exercised by those countries that are the subject of Security Council resolutions using Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. It is evident that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea falls into that category.

The recent announcement made by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that it was planning a satellite launch constitutes a clear violation of Security Council resolutions 1718 (2006) and 1874 (2009). Resolution 1874 (2009) bans any launch using ballistic-missile technology. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's missile-launching plan simply displays how insincere the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is and how easily it breaks hard-won promises.

Before the ink on the 29 February agreement between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has dried, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has once again breached its commitments and scrapped them. If the Democratic People's Republic of Korea proceeds with the missile launch, it would be a clear violation of the resolutions and will constitute a highly provocative action, threatening peace and security on the Korean peninsula and in North-East Asia. In that regard, the Government of the Republic of Korea calls upon the Democratic People's Republic of

Korea to rescind and stop its plan for the missile launch and instead put its people first.

I will now try to draw the attention of our colleague from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to specific clauses in Articles 48 and 103 of the United Nations Charter and to help him understand them. They are to be understood through the following explanation, which I hope will enlighten him.

Article 48 of the United Nations Charter states:

“The action required to carry out the decisions of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security shall be taken by all the Members of the United Nations.”

As Security Council resolutions 1718 (2006) and 1874 (2009) were adopted under Chapter VII of the Charter, all Members, including the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, should carry out their obligations. Under the United Nations Charter and the relevant Security Council resolutions, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea cannot claim any right to engage in peaceful outer space activities or peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Article 103 of the Charter stipulates:

“In the event of a conflict between the obligations of the Members of the United Nations under the present Charter and their obligations under any other international agreement, their obligations under the present Charter shall prevail.”

The representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea mentioned joint military drills. As we all know, the Democratic People's Republic has constantly threatened and provoked the national security of the Republic of Korea. The sinking of the vessel *Cheonan* in 2010 was just one of numerous instances of military provocation by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The joint military exercises of the Republic of Korea and the United States of America are conducted to strengthen our deterrence capability against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's military provocations. We have been conducting the joint drills for decades — they are not a recent invention — and they are carried out in the presence of invited military observers. As such, the character of the military drills is purely defensive.

The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea argued that their country's nuclear development was triggered by the hostile United States

policy against the country, which is ridiculous. If we follow the absurd argument blaming hostility, many others would follow suit and develop nuclear weapons to counter their enemies.

When it comes to the prohibition of nuclear weapons, there is neither tolerance nor exception. My delegation takes this opportunity once again to urge that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea stop making this hollow argument and heed the Security Council resolutions directed to it.

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to speak in right of reply.

Mr. Ri Tong Il (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): At the outset, I would like to express our gratitude to you, Sir, for your hard work and balanced approach to the agenda items. For the past two days, we have been involved in the hectic discussion of the draft agenda items.

Concerning the remarks made by the representative of South Korea, first, that representative referred to “North Korea” and “South Korea”, but the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has never said that the two are two different countries. I kindly ask the South Korean representative to call the Democratic People's Republic of Korea “North Korea”, so we do not mind. We are to be unified and we are making progress towards that unification. So there is no argument from me on that point.

Secondly, with regard to Security Council resolutions, the Permanent Representative of my country has already made it clear that no other legal instrument can stand above the Outer Space Treaty and the United Nations Charter. I want to remind the South Korean representative that there is an article of the Charter stipulating the sovereignty and equality of all States Members of the United Nations. We regret that he has overlooked that article.

Thirdly, with respect to the talks between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States, the South Korean representative mentioned that the ink is not yet dry. But that has nothing to do with talks between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States. It has to do with peaceful outer space activities, which are legitimate and equal for all countries, even South Korea. There are no exceptions. South Korea has had no reason to object. What can its

representative say — that North Korea’s satellite launch is not a satellite? It is a contradiction.

Fourthly, with regard to military drills, the representative of South Korea cannot say anything. He has no sovereign power in South Korea. The military commander of the South Korean army troops is not a South Korean national; he is a United States citizen. That is a fact. So the representative of South Korea has no power to comment on that.

Fifthly, the same applies to the hostile policies of the United States towards the nuclear programme of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. My Permanent Representative reiterated the presence on the Korean peninsula of over 1,000 nuclear weapons since the 1950s. We have been talking and talking, and making proposals all of which have fallen on deaf ears. We are now being called one of the “axis of evil” countries that might be subject to unilateral pre-emptive strikes. Out of the seven countries listed, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea is number one. Everybody knows because everybody here is a distinguished expert in disarmament affairs; South Korea is no exception in that.

Those are my comments. Since my Permanent Representative has clarified the principled position of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, I will stop here.

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): It is late in the day, and our colleagues in the interpretation service must bring their work to a close, so I would ask speakers to be very concise in their responses in the right of reply; otherwise we will have to continue without simultaneous interpretation.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea to speak in further right of reply.

Mr. Park Chul Min (Republic of Korea): I would like to exercise our second right to reply to what the representative of North Korea said.

I would say once again that North Korea is subject to Security Council resolution 1874 (2009). Under the United Nations Charter and Security Council resolutions 1718 (2006) and 1874 (2009), it cannot claim any right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy. It cannot lay claim to any peaceful use of outer space because, once again, resolution 1874 (2009) clearly demands that North Korea not conduct “any launch using ballistic missile technology”.

In addition, the United Nations Charter clearly states that Security Council resolutions adopted under Chapter VII should be applied to everybody equally.

I can say that North Korea’s planned launch will happen at a time when it is facing dire food shortages. The reports of the World Food Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization stress that the chronic food shortage is one of the most pressing human rights issues in North Korea. The rocket launch is estimated to cost as much as \$850 million. That amount of money is enough to purchase 1.4 billion tons of rice. It would be better for the North Korean regime to spend that huge amount of money to improve the lives of its own people.

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.

Mr. Ri Tong Il (Democratic People’s Republic of Korea): I apologize for asking for the floor again. It is once again to our great regret that the South Korean representative has taken the floor on a question that has no legal grounds. The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea makes it clear once again that the Security Council resolution to which the representative referred has nothing to do with a peaceful satellite launch. It cannot stand above the Outer Space Treaty. The Treaty is an international instrument. How many member States are sitting in the Security Council? There are only 15. They cannot represent international law; they cannot represent the international community. The Security Council should address global peace and security. That resolution, which is talked about repeatedly by the South Korean representative, has nothing to do with peace and security on the Korean peninsula. Who is causing the trouble on the Korean peninsula? The picture is clear. My Permanent Representative clarified our position so I do not need to go into who is causing the trouble. The Security Council has never talked about the core issue of the trouble-making and the peace efforts on the Korean peninsula.

Secondly, he touched on the very sensitive issue of human rights. He never talks about human rights in his own country. In South Korea, there is a security law that addresses the issue of political activities in South Korea. Anyone who becomes a dissident is said to be pro-North Korea. If you say something different, you are penalized. In terms of social and human rights and political activities, how many people are suffering under that law?

Beyond that, South Koreans are killing themselves. They are record-holders in terms of suicide. I think they are ranked second in the world. Why are South Koreans killing themselves?

There are many things to talk about, but I do not need to go into details. Therefore, I would like to

recommend that, before worrying about somebody else, the South Korean representative should look at himself and take care of his own people.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.