



General Assembly

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First Committee

20th meeting

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Official Records

Chair: Mr. Viinanen (Finland)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda items 87 to 106 (continued)

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

The Chair: This afternoon the Committee will conclude its thematic discussion and will begin by listening to the remaining speakers on our rolling list for cluster 7, “Disarmament machinery”. Thereafter, we will go through the arrangements for taking action on draft resolutions and then will hear presentations from representatives of non-governmental organizations in accordance with our programme of work.

Mr. Manfredi (Italy): We would like to commend the Netherlands, Switzerland and South Africa for having introduced draft resolution A/C.1/66/L.39, entitled “Revitalizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament and taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations”. We have been involved from the very beginning in the informal meetings of like-minded countries held in Geneva to agree on a draft text, and are quite pleased with the final version. This result would not have been possible without the admirable hard work carried out by the delegations of these three countries. We are confident that the draft resolution will be approved by a handsome majority or, even better, by consensus.

The initiative to submit the draft resolution derives from the decision of the Secretary-General to convene

a High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on this topic in September 2010. The reason was the persistent and, frankly, intolerable incapacity of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) to agree on any programme of work whatsoever for the past 15 years, with the ephemeral exception of 2009.

The aim of draft resolution A/C.1/66/L.39 — similar to that of its predecessor resolution 65/93, adopted last year — is to keep political pressure undiminished and coax the CD back to productive life — which would mean, of course, negotiating international instruments for disarmament and non-proliferation. Italy fully subscribes to this aim and, since the very beginning, consistently supported the idea of the Secretary-General to convene the High-level Meeting.

Paradoxically though, in spite of the paralysis of the CD, international disarmament efforts have not been without success these past two years. We witnessed, for example, the positive outcome of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Very recently one of the main chapters of its plan of action — the convening of a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction — received a significant boost with the decision, taken by the three depositary countries of the Treaty, to hold the conference in Finland and to appoint the Finnish Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs as its facilitator.

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We have also seen in these past months the successful negotiation, signature and ratification of the New START treaty between Russia and the United States, which will bring about a significant reduction in the atomic arsenals of the two main nuclear Powers. In late 2008, the Oslo Convention on Cluster Munitions was signed. My country was one of the original signatories, and we ratified it last summer. Today, more than 100 countries have joined this instrument.

The fact remains, however, that these successes were achieved outside the Conference on Disarmament, in spite of the fact that the Conference is defined as the world's single multilateral negotiating body in the field of disarmament. The more we study the failings of the CD, the more we are convinced that the real problem of the Conference is not the lack of political will, though some may still hold to this view. These past days in the First Committee have shown beyond a shadow of a doubt that the political will within and without the membership of the Conference in fact exists and is alive and healthy.

Four draft resolutions that deal directly or indirectly with the CD, its activity and ills have been introduced this year: A/C.1/66/L.39, which I have just mentioned; a Canadian one on a fissile material cut-off treaty (A/C.1/66/L.40/Rev.1**); another by Austria, Norway and Mexico, entitled "Taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations" (A/C.1/66/L.21); and finally, one by Cuba on the 2011 annual report of the Conference on Disarmament (A/C.1/66/L.13/Rev.1).

In Geneva this spring, furthermore, Australia and Japan took the initiative to organize a nine-day-long side event on specific aspects of a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) in the margins of the Conference on Disarmament, which has been instrumental in clarifying for future reference a number of complex questions pertaining to the treaty. Finally, we must mention with appreciation the work in progress among the five nuclear-weapon States to arrive at a common outlook on an FMCT within the CD and their steady efforts to involve in this exercise also the three States possessing nuclear weapons not parties to the NPT.

The real problem of the Conference on Disarmament, therefore, is not the alleged lack of political will among its members. In our opinion, what is thwarting the CD is instead the misuse of its rules of procedure, especially the consensus rule, by a small few who, for reasons of national political necessity, however legitimate, prevent

the majority who have equally valid and legitimate political reasons to get on with negotiating disarmament and non-proliferation agreements. The reason the consensus rule exists in the CD is to prevent any treaty from being concluded contrary to the security interests of a member, not to prevent negotiations. No one that we are aware of is capable of predicting a negotiation's outcome before negotiations end or even start.

I will recall that, in late May 2009, the Conference on Disarmament did adopt by consensus a programme of work that included negotiations but was then unable to implement it because one country prevented the Conference from reaching further consensus on altogether much more mundane issues that did not really pertain to national security, such as on which days of the week to hold the meetings of the ad hoc working groups, in which rooms and chaired by whom.

Other provisions of the rules of procedure also warrant a reappraisal. The monthly rotation of the presidency appears to be too frequent, to the detriment of the continuity of the Conference's work. Perhaps as a preliminary suggestion, we could envisage two six-monthly presidencies per year. Also, the President's decision-making authority could be better defined to allow him to take routine decisions without the need first to consult the membership.

Furthermore, the rule requiring the adoption every year of a new programme of work appears to be unwise. It allows any member on 1 January to indefinitely block any further negotiations it no longer wishes to be held by withholding assent to extend them for a further year in the provisions of a new programme of work — a likely scenario when we consider that concluding any treaty dealing with disarmament and non-proliferation will take far longer than one year. A way to correct this would be that the validity of an approved programme of work would be automatically extended every 31 December unless a new programme of work is agreed upon by consensus.

Therefore, we believe that further thought should be given to the working methods of the CD in order to make them more attuned to its reason for existence. Having said all that, we are not blind to the postulate that there are no procedural solutions to political problems, as our Foreign Minister stated last year. Nonetheless, we are also convinced that addressing the rules problem can no longer be postponed, and we must

do so with courage and commitment while striving to solve the underlying political issues.

I should like to conclude by saying a few words also on the draft resolution presented by Cuba entitled “Report of the Conference on Disarmament”. Unsurprisingly, the report is essentially a procedural document since this year, just as in the preceding 14 years, no formal work was done at the CD. Nonetheless, the text of the draft resolution does mention the follow-up to the High-level Meeting and call for greater flexibility to adopt a programme of work and start substantive activity in the Conference. The situation of the Conference on Disarmament is now so dire that even a procedural text such as this could not forgo the need to include a political message. For this we are grateful to Cuba, which as this year’s last President of the CD, skilfully led the consultations in Geneva to draft the text.

Mr. Lusiński (Poland): Poland is seriously concerned about the persistent stagnation that has affected the multilateral disarmament mechanisms for more than a decade. In particular, we are concerned about the stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament (CD), which since 2009 has reached new dimensions. It has to be emphasized that, in 2009, the implementation of the CD’s arduously negotiated consensus decision on breaking the deadlock was frustrated by some of its members without any convincing arguments for such an action. We regret that in this case the Conference’s rules of procedure were both abused and bypassed by mounting unjustified demands for yet another decision on the implementation of the recently adopted programme of work.

This is the second case in just a few years of turning down the opportunity to break a decade-long stalemate. It is worth recalling that, in 2006, the six-Presidents formula, adopted to facilitate the substantive work of the Conference under the guidance of its successive Presidents, brought considerable intensification to the debates. Many members of the Conference regarded this process as the practical implementation of rule 19 of the rules of procedure, which stipulates that the work of the Conference shall be primarily conducted in plenary meetings.

The six Presidents of the 2006 session reinvigorated the Conference and proved that it could make substantial progress on its agenda — even without the adoption of the mythical programme of work — just by strictly

observing the rules of procedure and the working methods provided for therein. Although at the end of that session some members prevented the Conference from finalizing its achievements and recording that successful breakthrough in its report, the ideas of the 2006 Presidents, summarized in their document entitled “The P6 Vision Paper” changed the working methods of the Conference for the years to come.

In the past few years, we have noticed a growing opposition among CD members to certain practices that have been used unilaterally to block the implementation of the consensus decisions of the Conference. The lengthy procedural stalling in the CD prompted some member States to seek an alternative forum or process in which substantive work could be undertaken on issues that are ripe for negotiation or for substantive consideration without, however, the constraints of the CD’s working methods. We believe that the time has come to give serious consideration to alternative ways of moving forward and beginning substantive work on the issues that are ripe for negotiation.

Recently, we have seen the crisis in the Conference lead to serious soul-searching in other disarmament bodies that also have roots in the decisions of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-I) and have themselves been struggling for some time with their own stagnation or, in other words, with their own crises of identity. Strangely enough, these bodies, being part and parcel of the disarmament machinery established by the SSOD-I, instead of focusing on their own revitalization have preferred to focus on ways and means of bringing the Conference back to substantive work.

It would be appropriate to recall in this connection the old Latin proverb *medice cura te ipsum* — which means “physician, heal thyself”. It is understandable that in such circumstances some CD members concerned about the future of the Conference — which was mandated by the Final Document of SSOD-I (resolution S-10/2) to perform the functions of a single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of limited size taking decisions on the basis of consensus — have concluded that at this stage there is no prospect of overcoming the current impasse and proposed the establishment of a group of governmental experts with a mandate to identify options, including the necessary legal and procedural requirements to launch the negotiation of a treaty to ban the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices.

This is a very timely proposal, and Poland therefore gives it its full support.

On the other hand, we are sceptical about the advisability and practical usefulness of recent proposals put forward concerning the revisions of the Conference's rules of procedure, particularly with respect to decision-making by consensus or to the rotating presidency. One should remember that some disarmament bodies, such as the Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, have in their rules of procedures provisions for reverting to voting in case of the absence of consensus. Nevertheless, they have never used that option and even in very difficult cases have manifested their determination not to create a precedent that could compromise the preferred way of decision-making in disarmament and arms control bodies — that is, consensus.

We strongly believe that the rotating presidency in the CD gives a chance for each and every member State to contribute to the work of the Conference in the foreseeable time span, without absorbing its sometimes limited human and organizational resources for too long. There is convincing proof in the history of the CD presidency that the representatives of small countries have performed their presidential duties in an exemplary manner. Extending the presidency for the entire year would deprive small countries, with limited representation in Geneva, of the possibility of contributing their wisdom and experience to solving the security concerns of the contemporary world.

It also has to be emphasized that continuity in chairing the substantive work in the subsidiary bodies, which is the preferred and well-proven mechanism for negotiations, is ensured by the well-established and workable practice of the Conference of appointing the chairs of subsidiary bodies, or coordinators charged with specific tasks, for the duration of the whole session of the Conference. To put it bluntly, there is no need to reinvent the wheel.

Mr. Nagy (Hungary): Hungary firmly believes in the multilateral approach to security, disarmament and non-proliferation. Multilateralism, we believe, is the best tool for maintaining international peace and security. At the same time, however, we see a need to overcome the crisis we have been experiencing in multilateral disarmament efforts over many years, in particular as a result of the ongoing stalemate in the

Conference on Disarmament (CD) and the lack of tangible results in the United Nations Disarmament Commission. This is all the more important as we need to address major proliferation challenges. Non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control, together with confidence, transparency and reciprocity, are vital aspects of collective security.

The Conference on Disarmament, in accordance with its mandate, is the body that has a crucial role in negotiating multilateral treaties. After more than a decade of deadlock, its revitalization is more urgent than ever. The consensus rule in the CD must not be subject to abuse. The world cannot afford to stand still on the crucial issues of disarmament and non-proliferation, or to allow procedural issues to stymie real political progress.

Hungary was among the first to co-sponsor the resolution on the High-level Meeting on revitalizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament and taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations called by His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon during the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly. Hungary was also one of the signatories of the letter sent by Austria that was submitted on 18 April 2011 to the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly on behalf of 49 States asking to convene a General Assembly plenary debate on the revitalization of the CD. Hungary also fully subscribes to the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union (see A/65/PV.113) on the issue of revitalization during the General Assembly debate held from 27 to 29 July 2011.

The long-term deadlock of core disarmament forums such as the CD poses a serious problem. Therefore, we think that Member States should consider options to overcome the deadlock in the CD. In this context, Hungary notes with appreciation the growing number of initiatives and proposals aimed at finding a way out of the deadlock in the work of the disarmament machinery. Our conviction is that the CD needs to resume its work without delay. We urgently need to make multilateral progress on the crucial issues that have been on our agenda for such a long time.

Mr. Langeland (Norway): The intergovernmental disarmament machinery is supposed to facilitate deliberations, and subsequently negotiations, with the goal of reaching legally binding instruments enhancing our common security and removing weapons that cause

unacceptable humanitarian harm. Negotiating bodies are not ends in themselves — their outcomes are — and negotiations can take many forms. Recent examples from humanitarian disarmament have demonstrated that it is possible to forge a political will and then translate it into tangible results that make a difference for civilians.

It follows that we should not use the existing machinery to attempt to undermine norms established in multilateral negotiations that have led to important treaties effectively addressing humanitarian concerns. The current discussions on cluster munitions within the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW) may be seen to be doing exactly that. This might both jeopardize the credibility of the CCW and undermine its relevance.

Today there is undoubtedly a broad political will to further strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime and to move towards a world free of nuclear weapons. That was clearly demonstrated by the outcome of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We have seen it again in the many statements given at this session of the First Committee.

The fact of the matter is, however, that the current machinery impedes us from translating this political will into concrete actions. While it could be affirmed that we must honour the outcome of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the fact is that the legacy of 1978 today prevents us from making genuine progress in nuclear multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation. Indeed, we are now allowing those who do not seek progress to set the pace.

Norway has been open to the proposal of convening a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-IV) provided it could yield fast and substantial results. However, we question the wisdom of engaging in an indefinite process of consultations that may lead nowhere just for the sake of doing it. In reality, do we really want such a lengthy and costly process? While not excluding an SSOD-IV, we should be ready to consider other options to move forward.

Starting with a body that is located here in New York, the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) was established to conduct substantive

intergovernmental deliberations and to make recommendations in this regard. Yet the sad fact is that the UNDC has not produced anything since 1999. The lack of results has greatly affected the degree and level of participation by member States in its regular sessions. Some even question the continued existence of the UNDC. Instead of continuing to lament this situation, we should explore ways to give the UNDC a meaningful role.

My delegation agrees that the sixty-fifth session led to a very useful exchange of views among member States and thus partly fulfilled its deliberative function. At the same time, it is evident that it will be a tall order for the UNDC to come up with agreed and comprehensive recommendations. One idea, also previously suggested by Norway, is that each year the First Committee task the following UNDC session with looking into certain well-defined topics. The outcome of these sessions could be a Chair's summary presenting the different and eventually converging views on any given topic. The following session of the First Committee might then decide on a possible course of action, drawing on the UNDC report. Also, the UNDC sessions should be shorter and more manageable, inviting more expert participation from capitals. If we are not ready to consider ways and means of improving the functioning of the UNDC, we run the risk of further marginalizing that body.

The same can be said of the Conference on Disarmament (CD), which is proclaimed to be the single multilateral negotiating body. The fundamental question today is whether the CD is at all capable of reforming itself. As long as the consensus rule is applied to any procedural issue, any effort to improve its functions runs the risk of stumbling on the need to protect national interests among one or several of its 65 member States.

The limited number of member States is in itself a major problem for the legitimacy of the CD. A credible and relevant multilateral negotiating body, seeking to negotiate treaties that are to be valid for all States, should be open to all States interested in joining. Furthermore, the CD lacks constructive interaction with civil society. That may have been acceptable when the disarmament machinery was set up 30 years ago, but today it is not. If the CD had been working as the sole multilateral negotiating body in the field of arms control, the arms trade treaty process would probably

not have been generated by the General Assembly but would have been on the agenda of the CD.

It is about time that the General Assembly communicates clearly to the CD and its member States that time is running out and that there are viable alternatives to the CD that we could resort to. The draft resolution put forward by Austria, Mexico and Norway (A/C.1/66/L.21/Rev.1), drawing upon the legitimacy and authority of the General Assembly itself, is such an alternative, and there might also be others.

We should also look at ways to improve the working methods of the First Committee. This body should play a crucial role in advancing the work of disarmament and non-proliferation, which is all the more important as the other parts of the machinery have come to a standstill. Are we using our time in an efficient way in this body? We had discussions about that a few years back and we should be open to looking into ways to further revitalize this body.

To conclude, the 2010 NPT Review Conference sent a strong political message about the overall objective of reaching a more secure world without nuclear weapons. We need to heed this obligation.

Ms. Morgan (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I first wish to express Mexico's support for all efforts to strengthen the disarmament machinery, including those undertaken by the Secretary-General to draw political attention to the revitalization of the disarmament machinery, especially the Conference on Disarmament (CD) through the High-level Meeting of 2010 and its follow-up debate on 27 July (see A/65/PV.113). For Mexico, restoring functionality to the disarmament machinery is a pressing, high-priority task on which depends the creation of common understanding around the issue of disarmament, specific new binding legal instruments and consolidating existing regimes.

The first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament in 1978 distinguished the differentiated deliberative functions of the United Nations Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament to negotiate binding international legal agreements. Mexico gave limited support to these forums because they were created to reach an end to which Mexico attaches the highest priority. We recognize the great contribution these forums have made in the past. For this reason and because of our insatiable search for general and complete disarmament, the current situation seems unjustifiable and unacceptable to us.

I will turn first to the CD. The fact that this forum has not been able to fulfil its mandate and the purpose for which it was created by the international community is of concern and intolerable to Mexico. We believe that one reason why international organizations exist is to provide a space for the States represented there to establish a dialogue and reach common understandings. These spaces must provide mechanisms so that decision-making encourages the building of agreements.

The CD was created in a context and international play of forces responding to cold-war necessities, and under those dynamics it was able to reach agreements. In the twenty-first century, the composition, rules of procedure and working methods of the CD face challenges to their functioning based on the logic of a multipolar international scenario, which inhibit their decision-making process.

Mexico does not subscribe to the view that the CD is a victim of circumstances and that, so long as a favourable environment for negotiations does not exist, it will not be able to function. We believe that international relations are always difficult, and it is to the task of multilateral forums to foster agreements even in adversity. In the same way, the States represented in the CD work in other organizations and protect their national interests in other international forums that are not stalemated under the current international scenario.

In recent years, the CD has conducted many informal activities in the absence of substantive work, but that does not mean that we are close to breaking the impasse. For this reason, we recognize the efforts of the platform of the six Presidents of the CD, which each year has sought to keep the Conference active in the face of the impossibility of fulfilling its mandate. In this regard, we recall the informal discussions that have taken place at this session, especially the informal debates during the Colombian presidency, which reflected the divergence and ideas on the situation of the Conference.

We therefore recognize the value of external impetus that States can give to the work that should take place in the CD. These efforts strengthen mutual understanding on respective positions and allow us to use the time in a productive fashion. But keeping busy is not the same thing as doing the substantive work of the Conference.

We must make the most of the CD as a vehicle to an end that has not been reached in 15 years. The paradox of our times is that, in the midst of a renewed momentum in the multilateral disarmament agenda and recent encouraging signs represented by unilateral and bilateral decisions to reduce arms, the negotiations we expect, for example in compliance with the provisions of article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, cannot begin.

For more than a decade, the stalemate has damaged the disarmament machinery as a whole because when the CD merely deliberates, not only does it not fulfil its mandate but it also duplicates the functions of the Disarmament Commission. To this we should add the fact that discussions in the Conference on many occasions have touched almost exclusively on procedural issues, and the CD has not been able to propose recommendations in recent years.

Mexico supports the holding of a new special session of the General Assembly to comprehensively address the functioning of the disarmament machinery and the Conference in particular. However, this would appear to be only a distant possibility today, and the likelihood of the Conference improving its working methods on its own is even more distant. We therefore believe that we cannot continue to wait for the session to take place to rethink our current disarmament machinery and how to implement it.

As everybody knows, my country has for several years sought to structure different alternatives to build trust and understanding on these and other matters on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament. Together with Austria and Norway, we shall introduce a draft resolution to the First Committee with a specific proposal to consider alternatives to move disarmament negotiations forward only if the impasse in the Conference continues.

We believe that the General Assembly should urgently give new impetus to the work of the Conference because, as long as we agree to inactivity, we generate negative incentives towards the general and complete disarmament we all seek. For this reason, we call on the United Nations to consider our proposal and others that will make it possible to renew disarmament commitments, including to effective reform of the machinery, which is not fulfilling its purpose or making the most of its potential, to the detriment of the interests of collective security.

Mr. Laggner (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): While the challenges in the field of international security and disarmament remain numerous, both the Conference on Disarmament (CD) and the United Nations Disarmament Commission have been deadlocked for years, at a time when international challenges are numerous. I will not elaborate on Switzerland's serious concern over the lack of progress in these forums. Let me nevertheless stress three points that illustrate our viewpoint.

First, it is of the utmost importance to have mechanisms and platforms that facilitate meaningful, timely and effective deliberations and negotiations on all issues relating to arms control and disarmament. Secondly, the existing mechanisms suffer above all from an absence of political will to make progress or to capitalize on such political will as it arises. Thirdly, the current difficulties cannot be attributed solely to external political factors. The lack of progress is also of an institutional nature.

Switzerland has followed with great interest the various developments since the High-level Meeting convened by the Secretary-General in September 2010 and the follow-up plenary debate of the General Assembly in July 2011. We would like once again to thank the Secretary-General for having initiated this revitalization process and for his efforts. We are glad that many member States are responding to his encouraging calls for the revitalization of the disarmament machinery. The fact that Member States seem to be taking greater ownership of this process is a welcome development.

In order to make progress in the revitalization process, to take forward multilateral disarmament and to initiate the necessary reforms, a number of ideas and proposals have been presented. Some are more comprehensive in nature, while others are more targeted. Some are very ambitious; others less so. Some advocate revitalization within the CD; others suggest trying fresh approaches within the broader United Nations framework. We value all these proposals, developments and initiatives as important contributions that could potentially help to unlock the situation in the CD and have a positive impact on the disarmament machinery.

It is in that spirit that Switzerland, together with South Africa and the Netherlands, has introduced draft resolution A/C.1/66/L.39, entitled "Revitalizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament and taking

forward multilateral disarmament negotiations". The Ambassador of South Africa introduced the draft resolution yesterday (see A/C.1/66/PV.19). We are convinced that the draft resolution can unite member States and be a vehicle for a member State-driven revitalization process. We hope that it will enjoy wide cross-regional sponsorship.

We believe that there is a need for a General Assembly resolution that encourages ongoing efforts, invites further analysis and contributes to a consolidation of the various options, proposals and elements that have been put forward to date. The draft resolution also paves the way for the General Assembly to consider taking further steps, if the situation fails to change for the better, at its sixty-seventh session.

We are convinced that the discussions on revitalization have already had a positive effect. Even if no easy solution exists, the First Committee is focusing energetically on the challenge of taking forward multilateral disarmament and of revitalizing the work of the CD. We realize that the concerns about the recurring failures of the CD to fulfil its mandate are now shared by more member States than ever before. We are particularly encouraged by the increased efforts of the member States, including the five nuclear-weapon States, to find solutions to the current deadlock. We have been supportive of these efforts and would be pleased to see such initiatives yield tangible results.

To conclude, I should like to reiterate that Switzerland is firmly resolved to upholding and preserving the institutions that have served us well in the past. We want a strong CD, but one that is active and engaged in tangible work; if it is not, it will undermine its own standing and legitimacy.

We remain convinced of the need for a permanently available pool of disarmament delegations, supported by experts from capitals, international organizations and civil society. We also consider it to be of the utmost importance to maintain a permanent forum like the Conference on Disarmament that addresses disarmament challenges and contributes thereby to global security in the twenty-first century. We need such structures not only to negotiate new instruments but also to ensure the full implementation of existing agreements.

Mr. Jerman (Slovenia): I should like again to express satisfaction at seeing you, Sir, a representative of a fellow European Union member State, at the helm

of the Committee and to congratulate you on your ambitious chairmanship of our Committee.

Slovenia is a staunch supporter of effective multilateralism and believes in a multilateral approach to solving problems and addressing international affairs. In this regard, we are not satisfied with the current situation in the area of international disarmament negotiations. As we all know, the international disarmament machinery no longer serve its purpose properly. Two of its main forums — the Conference on Disarmament (CD) and the United Nations Disarmament Commission — have become dysfunctional. Even the First Committee, which seems to be the only performing body of the international disarmament machinery, has clearly the potential and room for improvement. Our Committee's deliberations could indeed be less repetitive and it could have more strategic and focused discussions on international disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation issues.

That is the reason why last year Slovenia warmly welcomed the initiative of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to organize the High-level Meeting on disarmament that took place on 24 September last year here in New York. We have to admit that there has been no real progress in the field of international disarmament and arms control for quite some time. Last year at the High-level Meeting, we heard many forward-looking and useful proposals and ideas. We believe that now is the time to move on with a substantive follow-up and to start to implement these ideas. The current session of this Committee is a good opportunity for that.

That is exactly why we co-sponsored draft resolution A/C.1/66/L.39, entitled "Revitalizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament and taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations" presented by the Netherlands, South Africa and Switzerland. We are convinced that the draft resolution has added value and deserves the unanimous support of the Committee. The purpose of the draft resolution should be to pave the way not only towards modernization and revitalization, but also to a thorough reform of the international disarmament machinery that would allow it adequately to respond to the challenges of our times. We are all aware that this cannot happen overnight and that the process that we started last year will be long, demanding and challenging.

In this context we also support draft resolution A/C.1/66/L.21 entitled "Taking forward multilateral

disarmament negotiations” presented by Norway, Austria and Mexico. The draft resolution opens the door to a new avenue that could be pursued in the future, notably at the sixty-seventh session of this Committee next year. The draft resolution makes an important point regarding the valuable asset that the international community has in Geneva, where we have a skilled disarmament diplomatic corps that could be used for this purpose in case the deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament continues. We believe that, in the situation we are now facing, we should explore all possible ways to move international disarmament negotiations forward.

We agree that we should distinguish between short-term and long-term objectives. We believe that one of the short-term goals of the international community could be not only the revitalization of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva but also its expansion. In this regard, we follow the idea enshrined in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (resolution S-10/2) that all nations of the world are responsible for international peace and security and thus they all have a right to participate in international disarmament negotiations.

That is why Slovenia calls upon members of the Conference on Disarmament to start discussions on enlargement and, early in the CD’s 2012 annual session, appoint a special rapporteur on the enlargement of the Conference.

Mr. Oyarzun (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Spain believes that the best way to maintain international peace and security is to take a multilateral approach to disarmament and non-proliferation issues. My delegation is therefore firmly in favour of strengthening the relevant disarmament and non-proliferation multilateral institutions: the First Committee, the United Nations Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament.

The Conference on Disarmament needs to emerge as soon as possible from the 14 years of stagnation that have made it ossified and dysfunctional. The Conference on Disarmament faces procedural and political problems, as other delegations have stated. From a procedural point of view, we regret that abuse of the rule of consensus has made it a virtual right of veto that paralyses ongoing work. The Spanish delegation believes that the rule of consensus is an inclusive

practice created to make room for all sensitivities of member States, and not a way to rule out debate and subvert the Conference’s negotiating mandate.

We are compelled to describe as a structural crisis the situation in that multilateral disarmament forum. The situation has lasted too many years and reflects a patent inability to respond to the complexities of the current security context, and calls into question the status quo of the disarmament machinery. From the political perspective, the problems of the Conference are in our opinion due to a rigid perception of security and an inability properly to assess the dimensions of security issues.

In the field of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, we believe it essential to understand that threats to security are of concern to all countries and not a mere few, and that solutions must therefore also be addressed by all. There is no better way to find solutions to common problems than to undertake multilateral negotiations in the forum created for that purpose, instead of applying all our efforts and energy to a perpetual search for the causes of the negotiating paralysis.

In addition, the Disarmament Commission also needs to begin to generate tangible results. To that end, more attention should be given to the streamlining of debates, making them more concrete and specific and focusing on priority topics for discussion. It would also be advisable for the Chairman’s working documents to reflect progress made so that the work of subsequent sessions can build on that of previous ones.

My delegation believes that there is also a need to review and strengthen the working methods of the First Committee. Our work should focus on the search for courageous solutions to existing problems rather than on revising agreed texts. Spain reiterates its commitment to the disarmament machinery. Far from being satisfied with the present structure and working methods, we are committed to in-depth reflection and debate that deliver results. We are willing to work with all delegations present here in order to achieve these objectives.

Mr. Špokauskas (Lithuania): As a State member of the European Union (EU), Lithuania fully subscribes to and actively supports EU policies in the domain of international security, disarmament and non-proliferation.

Let me now elaborate on some matters of particular importance to Lithuania. We believe that a multilateral approach to disarmament and non-proliferation is essential to developing, maintaining and further strengthening fundamental norms. Being a firm supporter of effective multilateralism, Lithuania regards the First Committee, the Conference on Disarmament (CD), and the United Nations Disarmament Commission as important mutually reinforcing elements of the disarmament machinery.

We regret that, despite clear calls from the General Assembly and other forums, the CD has not yet been able to build upon the momentum and break the impasse. Since negotiations on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in 1996, multilateral disarmament treaties such as the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction and the Convention on Cluster Munitions, have been negotiated outside the CD.

Given the continuing stalemate in the CD, the international community needs to reflect on options and, if necessary, identify other ways to ensure progress. Therefore we welcome initiatives put forward at this session of the First Committee aimed at exploring ways that could lead to negotiations on at least some issues on the current CD agenda.

The CD enlargement has been an outstanding issue for more than a decade and needs to be addressed without delay. This call is in line with the rules of procedure of the CD, which provide for a review of the membership question at regular intervals. The informal group of observer States has repeatedly called for the appointment of a special rapporteur or coordinator who could facilitate discussion on the matter without prejudging its outcome. Lithuania is convinced that the expansion of the CD membership would promote transparency and inclusiveness and thus reflect the universal disarmament goals.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of Indonesia to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/66/L.9.

Mr. Soemirat (Indonesia): I have the honour to deliver the position of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). NAM remains steadfast in fully supporting the multilateral disarmament agenda and strengthening the United Nations disarmament machinery. It is high time that all countries work together, cooperate more and bring to bear their respective political capital to

revitalize this crucial machinery. Promoting the work of the United Nations disarmament machinery hinges on creating a suitable political environment, taking into account the security interests of all States rather than changing the rules of procedure.

NAM recognizes the need to enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations disarmament machinery. In this context, NAM notes that the main difficulty encountered by the disarmament machinery lies in the lack of true political will on the part of some States to achieve actual progress, including in particular on nuclear disarmament. While it is important to recall the achievements arrived at by the international community within the Conference on Disarmament (CD), NAM expresses its disappointment that the CD has not been able to undertake the substantive work on its agenda for many years. In this regard, NAM believes that it is counterproductive to ascribe the lack of concrete results in the CD to its rules of procedure, as such an approach could conceal the true obstacle faced by the CD, which is the lack of political will.

NAM reaffirms the importance of the CD as the sole multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament, and reiterates its call on the CD to agree on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work by, inter alia, establishing an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament as soon as possible and as the highest priority. NAM emphasizes the necessity to start negotiations without further delay on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified time frame, including a nuclear weapons convention. NAM reaffirms the importance of the unanimous conclusion of the International Court of Justice that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and to bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.

NAM noted the adoption of the programme of work for the 2009 session of the CD, contained in document CD/1864, on 29 May 2009, which was not implemented. NAM calls on the CD to agree by consensus on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work without further delay.

NAM also reaffirms the importance and relevance of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) as the sole specialized, deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery. We continue fully to support the work of

the UNDC and call upon United Nations Member States to display the necessary political will and flexibility in order to enable the UNDC to reach agreement on recommendations in its next cycle.

NAM recalls the paramount importance and continued validity of the consensus Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (resolution S-10/2) and its contribution to the international disarmament agenda and machinery within the United Nations. In this context, NAM reiterates its support for the convening of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament with a view to consolidating the multilateral disarmament agenda and machinery within the United Nations.

On behalf of NAM, I have the honour of presenting draft resolution A/C.1/66/L.9, entitled “United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament”. The Movement encourages United Nations activities at the regional level to advance the cause of disarmament, and thus contribute to enhancing the peace, security and stability of United Nations Member States. In this regard, the strengthened work of properly supported regional centres for peace and disarmament has an important bearing. We support the adequate maintenance and revitalization of the three regional centres for peace and disarmament.

To achieve positive results, the United Nations regional centres should carry out innovative dissemination and educational programmes on promoting regional peace and security by aiming to further influence basic attitudes on peace, security and disarmament. NAM hopes that all countries, along with civil society, non-governmental organizations and foundations, will assist these United Nations Centres in their efforts to promote international peace and disarmament. We are hopeful that this important draft resolution will get fitting support from all member States.

Mr. Hirji (Canada): For Canada, the potential contribution of United Nations disarmament machinery to peace and security remains significant. That is why, as the first President of the 2011 session of the Conference on Disarmament (CD), Canada worked with all delegations in an attempt to get the CD back to fulfilling its negotiating mandate. Despite these efforts, we were disappointed to find that positions remained as entrenched as ever, and we were consequently

unable to put forward a programme of work in that period. This unfortunate situation continued during subsequent presidencies and therefore this year, as in so many before, the CD remains deadlocked with no substantive progress achieved. It is unacceptable that that body, dedicated to advancing disarmament, can be presided over by known nuclear proliferators who are in violation of Security Council resolutions. That further undermines the credibility of the CD.

To address the stalemate at the CD, Canada has actively supported a variety of initiatives aimed at strengthening the disarmament machinery. For instance, last year our former Foreign Minister, the Honourable Lawrence Cannon, spoke at the Secretary-General’s High-level Meeting on revitalizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament. Further, together with our partners in the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, Canada is making practical contributions to implementing the 2010 action plan of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (see NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. I)). But alas, despite these and other noble efforts, it is clear that some are intent on maintaining the status quo.

Regrettably, the CD has over time usurped the role of the Disarmament Commission and has increasingly spent its time deliberating almost exclusively on procedural issues, thus failing to fulfil its own mandate as a negotiating forum. To reverse this trend, decisive change is desirable. The responsibility to make this and other aspects of the machinery function effectively lies not with only five or 65 countries, but with all United Nations Member States.

Collectively we must address the serious challenges posed by, among other factors, the fact that a small minority is blocking the CD from doing what it is supposed to do — negotiate. Broken disarmament machinery will not fix itself. We ought to assume our responsibility as accountable members of the international community to explore all avenues to make the CD realize its *raison d’être* and start negotiations.

Beyond the CD, we must make appropriate use of the international organizations, bodies, offices and units expressly designed to support the various international agreements that form part of the global non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament agenda. In particular, we would note the important work being done by, inter alia, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization,

the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the Implementation Support Units of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, and the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects.

The way in which these bodies function represents potential templates for getting the United Nations disarmament and related machinery back to productive work towards the common goal of a more secure world. That is why Canada is concerned that opposition by States such as Iran, Cuba and Venezuela at the IAEA annual General Conference in September prevented the adoption of a long-standing resolution on the strengthening of safeguards. That is a worrying development for a key aspect of disarmament machinery.

(spoke in French)

Canada believes that a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) is the next logical disarmament initiative and will again be introducing a draft resolution to ban the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other explosive devices. It is our hope that all nations will support this text, recognizing that the status quo of inaction is unacceptable. In that regard, our delegation congratulates Australia and Japan on co-chairing a series of FMCT side events in Geneva this year that have helped to lay the foundation for future negotiations.

(spoke in English)

In closing, I wish to reiterate Canada's commitment to working with all delegations in the First Committee to produce draft resolutions for consideration by the General Assembly that will further our common goal of international peace and security.

Mr. Aboul Enein (Egypt): Egypt first would like to associate itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. Egypt reiterates its full support for the existing United Nations disarmament machinery, which has proved to be a worthy set of international tools in the field of disarmament, as foreseen at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-I).

There is no doubt that the Conference on Disarmament (CD) remains the sole multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament. It is this context that should guide us when examining all the different resolutions that relate to the work of the CD. We should also recall that, through the Conference on Disarmament, the international community has obtained a number of key legal instruments that have framed our legal commitments and national and international practices in their domains.

For these reasons, it is not constructive to use this session of the First Committee to criticize the Conference on Disarmament or to take disarmament negotiations out of the context of the Conference. In fact, since the conclusion of the previous session of the First Committee, the United Nations has already played its role in the search for means to advance the disarmament agenda at the multilateral level, the most recent being the plenary debate held by the General Assembly in July as a follow-up to the High-level Meeting convened by the Secretary-General on 24 September 2010 with a focus on revitalizing the Conference on Disarmament.

This debate has clearly shown in our view that the absence of political will to reach a balanced outcome that reflects the interests of all countries remains the main obstacle impeding the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva and the Disarmament Commission in New York, and that the rules of procedure are not the problem. This conclusion comes as no surprise, since the solution always lies in addressing all the issues on the agenda of the Conference through an integrated approach that most importantly includes negotiation on nuclear disarmament, negative security assurances, and a treaty to ban fissile material, including stockpiles for military purposes.

While we salute the efforts of the Secretary-General to revitalize the work of the Conference on Disarmament, all such initiatives must be geared towards reinforcing the strength of the CD to deal effectively with disarmament issues within its substantive and procedural frameworks. We are hence deeply concerned about the calls of some to bypass the Conference on Disarmament by transferring the negotiations on topics that fall exclusively on its agenda to other forums.

The historical fact must be recalled that the consensus rule, which governs the Conference on Disarmament, was neither proposed nor claimed by the non-aligned countries. Rather, it was used by

other members seeking to take control of the CD's activities. We must hence make every possible effort to revitalize the Conference on Disarmament by exerting strong political will to ensure that it remains the sole multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament.

In fact, the multiplicity of the resolutions that deal with the work of the Conference on Disarmament distracts from the core task that merits the attention and effort of all Member States, which is to forge a new consensus on the adoption of a balanced and comprehensive programme of work without further delay. Additionally, some of the ideas being proposed may lead to the creation of duplicative structures that would discuss only one of the issues on the agenda of the CD while the Conference itself might be addressing it at the same time. Aside from potential encroachment on the CD, there is also the possible duplication of work.

Egypt welcomes any collective action of Member States aimed at revitalizing the work of the Conference, as long as such efforts target neither its rules of procedure nor its priorities. That was our position at the adoption of the programme of work for the Conference in 2009, as reflected in document CD/1864, and our approach to the High-level Meeting in September. It has not and will not change.

While fully agreeing that the revitalization of the Conference represents an important dimension of the efforts undertaken to revitalize the disarmament machinery, Egypt believes that there is considerable need for equal efforts to revitalize the United Nations Disarmament Commission and to further streamline the work of the First Committee. Recalling that today's disarmament machinery is primarily a creation of SSOD-I, the revitalization of such an important forum should take place along with our preparations for convening a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted disarmament, which would be the most competent forum to evaluate the mandates and procedural frameworks of the machinery, including in particular the Conference on Disarmament and the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

In this regard, Egypt supports the United Nations Disarmament Commission as the sole specialized deliberative body within the Organization's multilateral disarmament machinery and believes in the important work of the Commission and the important results it can produce. Through the Disarmament Commission, some key guidelines and norm-setting consensus frameworks

have evolved, including the 1999 guidelines on the establishment of nuclear-free zones. Egypt also welcomes the substantive efforts of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) on some disarmament issues. However, it remains of paramount importance to us that UNIDIR's resources and skills be developed to meet the priorities of the whole United Nations membership.

The importance of the issue of existing United Nations disarmament machinery requires that efforts be collective and not individual, complementary and not contradictory, consensual and not divisive. The First Committee must therefore consider these principles when examining the several draft resolutions that are put before it.

Mr. Pöhlö (Finland): When we, the international community, try to reassert the prestige of the multilateral disarmament machinery, we in Finland believe that the Conference on Disarmament (CD) should be the focal point of our efforts. The CD is irreplaceable in its role as the single multilateral negotiating body in the field of disarmament. The Conference can justifiably be proud of having managed to create international norms such as the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. These achievements are remarkable.

However, more than a decade-long deadlock in the CD threatens to unravel the system of multilateral disarmament negotiations. The United Nations disarmament machinery is in jeopardy and requires political re-engagement and fresh thinking by all of us. Launching negotiations would positively contribute to the climate of mutual trust and security.

A fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) should be a priority. We need to begin negotiations on such a treaty without delay. Those negotiations should take place in the CD. That is the forum that takes different national security concerns into account in a way that no ad hoc forum will do. That is something that smaller countries cannot afford to lose. An FMCT would take us a step closer to our goal of a world without nuclear weapons. It would also be essential to our non-proliferation efforts.

I appeal to everybody to allow the work of the CD to restart. We need more substantial discussion and research for common ground and less procedure in the First Committee and the United Nations Disarmament

Commission as well. We hope that, with the political re-engagement of all member States, we can together take the agenda forward. Now is the time to get down to work and my delegation has already rolled up its sleeves.

Mr. Seifi Pargou (Islamic Republic of Iran): First, I should like to associate myself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, while underlining the prime importance of multilateralism as the core principle of negotiations in the field of disarmament, is of the strong view that, due to the sensitive nature of disarmament issues and their close relationship to the supreme national security interests of States, multilateral, balanced, non-discriminatory, transparent and consensus-based negotiation within the United Nations is the only way to advance the multilateral disarmament agenda and machinery.

My delegation also highlights the paramount importance and continued validity of the constitution-like Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (resolution S-10/2)). This consensual document, in particular in its paragraphs 10, 20 and 113, recognizes the total elimination of nuclear weapons as the highest priority, and by acknowledging that little progress had been made in this regard within the existing disarmament machinery by 1978, contains decisions regarding their improvement and revitalization. Moreover, while underlining the significant role and effective functioning of an appropriate international machinery, it stresses in explicit terms that political will, especially on the part of nuclear-weapon States, is the decisive factor for real progress in disarmament machinery and nuclear disarmament as well.

Taking into account progress made within deliberative and negotiating bodies of the United Nations disarmament machinery, even in the complex political and security context of the cold war with the same structure and rules of procedure, it is evident that as a tool the machinery, in particular the CD, has perfectly proven its efficiency and the effectiveness of its rules of procedure, including the rule of consensus.

Therefore, the major problem of the United Nations disarmament machinery, in particular the CD, is the lack of genuine political will on the part of certain nuclear-weapon States and their advocates, which are

unwilling to agree on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work to deal with all core issues on an equal footing, and that wish to use the CD merely for the advancement of their own individual interests and are reluctant to take into account the security interests of others.

In such circumstances, neither the modification of the rules of procedure of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) or CD, nor the proliferation of resolutions or strange and unrealistic proposals to deal with highly sensitive disarmament issues, is a solution. We strongly believe that the CD is and should remain the sole multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament, and its role in the field of nuclear disarmament should be strengthened. In our view, there is no alternative to the CD, and the role of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-IV) cannot be replaced by any possible initiative. Instead of blaming the UNDC, the CD or the consensus rule for the current stalemate, the total blame should be put on countries such as Canada that consider these bodies, in particular the CD, as a single-issue venue and have blocked any progress therein for over a decade.

However, the only eligible and appropriate forum to discuss and direct substantive and institutional issues related to disarmament, including any possible modification of the mandates or rules of procedure of the CD and the UNDC, is SSOD-IV. Accordingly we strongly support the convening of SSOD-IV, which also enjoys the strong support of many countries, in particular non-member States.

Historically, the current problem in the CD is nothing new, although there have been continued attempts to conceal the political nature of inactivity in the UNDC and the CD, with technical questions such as the rules of procedure. But as the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters appropriately concluded in its report (see A/66/125), what appeared to be procedural problems were in fact political ones.

Therefore, the best way to address this challenge is indeed to cross the stream where it is shallowest by enlisting the strong political will, particularly on the part of certain nuclear-weapon States, on behalf of the United Nations disarmament machinery. We believe that the CD should focus on advancing the agenda of nuclear disarmament and the total elimination of nuclear weapons, leading to a nuclear-weapon-free

world. In this context, we strongly support the early commencement by the CD of negotiations on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified time frame, including a nuclear weapons convention.

Finally, in our view non-proliferation derives its legitimacy from a larger objective, which is nuclear disarmament. While over the past several decades advancing the goals of non-proliferation was forced to be at the top of the agendas of international forums, and considerable progress has been made in some areas, unfortunately there has been no progress in realizing the goal of nuclear disarmament, manifested in the constant reluctance of certain nuclear-weapon States to the commencement by the CD of negotiations on a nuclear weapons convention. As long as those nuclear-weapon States pursue this unbalanced approach and the world has been divided into nuclear haves and nuclear have-nots, not only will the goal of nuclear disarmament not be realized, but also the advancement of other goals will be seriously challenged.

The Chair: We have now heard all the statements on cluster 7, “Disarmament machinery”.

Programme of Work

The Chair: Tomorrow, 26 October we will begin the third and final segment, the action phase, on all draft resolutions and decisions. At this point, I should like to brief the Committee on the procedure that will guide our work during this phase.

The Committee will take action on all draft resolutions and decisions as outlined in the Chairman’s suggested programme in document CRP.2 which has now been circulated and uploaded to the First Committee Web portal, QuickFirst. I encourage all delegations to familiarize themselves with the programme.

Informal papers will be distributed by the Secretariat containing the list of draft resolutions that are ready for action in each of the seven clusters we have discussed, and voting will proceed cluster by cluster. The first informal paper has been circulated today. It is my intention, with members’ cooperation and based on past practice and precedent, to move as efficiently as possible from one cluster to another, maintaining a degree of flexibility when necessary.

During the decision-taking stage, delegations will have a final opportunity to introduce draft resolutions

in the cluster under consideration. I would kindly request that they be as brief as possible in doing so. Delegations wishing to make general statements or comments other than explanations of vote or position on the draft resolutions contained in a specific cluster will be able to do so.

Delegations will also have an opportunity to explain their positions or votes in a consolidated statement on all draft resolutions and decisions relating to a particular cluster before the Committee proceeds to take action. Voting will be conducted on draft resolutions one after the other and without interruption.

Once the Committee completes action on all draft resolutions and decisions contained in a particular cluster, delegations wishing to explain their positions or votes after the voting will be allowed to do so in a consolidated manner after the voting on a particular cluster has been completed. If for any reason action on draft resolutions and decisions listed in a particular informal paper is not completed during a given meeting, at its next meeting the Committee will first finish action on those remaining drafts before proceeding to take action on a new informal paper.

I intend to follow this procedure strictly in order to ensure the full and efficient utilization of the time and conference resources allocated to the Committee. As things stand, our remaining time is very limited. I therefore appeal to all delegations to observe this procedure fully and avoid any interruption once voting on a cluster begins.

I should also like to stress that, in accordance with the rules of procedure, sponsors of draft resolutions are not permitted to make any statement in explanation of their votes either before or after action is taken. They will, however, be permitted to make general statements only at the beginning of the meeting on a given cluster.

In order to avoid any misunderstanding, I strongly urge delegations seeking recorded votes on any draft resolution to kindly inform the Secretariat of their intention as early as possible before the Committee starts taking action on the cluster in question.

Finally, concerning the postponement of action on any draft resolution, I urge all delegations to inform the Secretariat in advance — at least one day before action is scheduled to be taken on the draft resolution on which they wish to postpone action. Every effort,

however, should be made to refrain from resorting to a deferment of action.

In order to ascertain that every delegation fully understands the process for the action phase, the Secretariat has prepared an information sheet, similar to that which has been circulated in previous years, regarding the ground rules for taking action on draft resolutions, which will be circulated in the room. I would ask all delegations to please ensure that they obtain a copy.

May I take it that the Committee agrees with this procedure?

It was so decided.

The Chair: We will now listen to presentations from representatives of 10 non-governmental organizations. Two will address issues pertaining to nuclear weapons, one will speak on outer space security, one will focus on

the deliberations of the Conference on Disarmament on a fissile material cut-off treaty, while six will discuss various issues relating to conventional weapons. I request our speakers kindly to make their statements brief and concise and to begin by stating the topic of their presentation.

Before proceeding, I will suspend the meeting to enable us to continue in an informal setting.

Ms. Borland (Belize), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The meeting was suspended at 4.40 p.m. and resumed at 5.45 p.m.

The Acting Chair: The next meeting of the Committee will be held tomorrow, 26 October, at 3 p.m. sharp in this Conference room, when we will begin the third and final phase of our work.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.