
Conference on Disarmament

20 March 2012

English

Final record of the one thousand two hundred and fifty-fifth plenary meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 20 March 2012, at 10.20 a.m.

President: Mr. Minelik Alemu Getahun.....(Ethiopia)

The President: I call to order the 1255th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Before I make my detailed remarks today, I would like to express our deep sadness at the killings of children and a teacher in Toulouse, France. I strongly condemn this heinous terrorist act. Our prayers and thoughts are with the families of the deceased, with the community and with the people and Government of France.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express our sadness at the passing of His Holiness Pope Shenouda, spiritual leader of the Egyptian Coptic Church. He was a symbol of tolerance and coexistence among followers of all faiths. He played an important role in strengthening the sisterly relations between Ethiopia and Egypt, through people-to-people relations in enhancing the historical ties of the Egyptian Coptic and Ethiopian Orthodox churches. I present deep condolences to the Egyptian Coptic Church, and its followers, and to the people and Government of Egypt.

At the outset, allow me to pay tribute to my predecessors, Ambassador Luis Gallegos of Ecuador and Ambassador Hisham Badr of Egypt, for their relentless efforts to shift the focus at the Conference on Disarmament to its substantive work. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for their efforts to encourage the Conference to discharge its mandate and for highlighting its importance for international peace and security.

Ethiopia's commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations on the maintenance of international peace and security and the settlement of international disputes by peaceful means has been demonstrated by its contributions to United Nations peacekeeping operations and efforts for peaceful resolution of conflicts around the world, with particular focus on the prevention and peaceful resolution of conflicts in Africa.

Let me say a few words on Ethiopia's special association with disarmament and international peace and security. As a victim of poisonous gas weapons, and with a history of struggle against foreign aggression, Ethiopia has a special attachment to disarmament norms, to international law and collective security in general. Ethiopia has thus maintained its active support for global disarmament efforts. In October 1935, Ethiopia ratified the 1925 Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare as its first disarmament treaty. Ethiopia has actively participated in the work of the Conference on Disarmament since its earlier incarnation as the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament and has acceded to the Biological Weapons Convention, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the Convention on Environmental Modification, the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, the Outer Space Treaty, the Partial Test Ban Treaty, the Sea-Bed Treaty, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty or Pelindaba Treaty.

As a member of the Non-Aligned Movement, Ethiopia has supported United Nations General Assembly resolutions on the total elimination of nuclear weapons based on an agreed time frame to reach the goal of achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world, on nuclear non-proliferation, on peaceful uses of nuclear energy, on the negotiation of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, on a multilaterally negotiated, legally binding instrument to guarantee non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, on the importance and urgency of preventing an arms race in outer space, and on transparency in armament, among others.

Ethiopia is particularly encouraged that the General Assembly has maintained its strong support to the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community, with a primary role in substantive

negotiations on priority questions of disarmament. We also welcome the various high-level officials who have addressed the Conference and expressed their support.

The General Assembly and a number of members of the Conference have repeatedly expressed their disappointment that the Conference on Disarmament has been unable to undertake its substantive work for a long time due to lack of agreement on a programme of work. It is incumbent on members of the Conference and rotating presidencies to continue the quest for a balanced and comprehensive programme of work through consultations, taking into account all relevant proposals and views.

Multilateralism in disarmament negotiation is the most dependable and inclusive avenue for concerted global action against proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and in reduction of the dangers posed by these weapons to international peace and security. Ethiopia is satisfied with the successful convening of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and supports the full implementation of its follow-up actions. As a State party to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, Ethiopia calls upon all States whose ratification is required for entry into force to ratify the Treaty without further delay.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in many parts of the world represents welcome progress in the field of nuclear disarmament. The African nuclear-weapon-free zone strengthens the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. Ethiopia echoes the call made by the General Assembly to the States contemplated in Protocol III to the Pelindaba Treaty that have not yet done so to take all necessary measures to ensure the speedy application of the treaty to territories for which they are, *de jure* or *de facto*, internationally responsible and that lie within the limits of the geographical zone established in the treaty.

We should maintain the interest and anticipation generated following the efforts of Ambassador Badr of Egypt. I intend to undertake consultations with other presidents of the current session and regional coordinators and members of the Conference on possible avenues to keep consulting and exchanging views, including in the plenary, on the need to adopt a balanced and comprehensive programme of work as called for by General Assembly resolution 66/59.

In the meantime, I also propose that we hold substantive discussions on the core issues before the Conference, based on a basic format and possibly to be recorded in the annual report. Such well-structured substantive debates on the core issues would add value to the identification of different elements envisaged under each issue. It would help build on previous discussions and submissions on these items to be improved upon and enhance confidence for eventual negotiations.

The second possible area for consideration would be revitalization of the Conference. This would draw on General Assembly resolution 66/66 entitled "Revitalizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament and taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations". Under this topic would come the question of a fourth special session of the General Assembly on disarmament and also ideas presented by Mr. Tokayev on this matter, namely on the role and structure of the six presidencies, on membership, on making the Conference more representative, on the possibility of addressing other issues than the four core issues, on the appointment of three special coordinators on the agenda, on the rules of procedure and membership, and on the possibility of merging the Conference on Disarmament and the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

In the coming two weeks and during the spring break, we shall work with regional coordinators to iron out a simple text for a substantive debate and reporting formats. We could hold the debates in the plenary with the participation of all members and possible inputs from observer States and civil society actors or we could also establish informal

structures with timetables. I shall be guided by the membership of the Conference on the details of these proposals.

Mr. Hilale (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): I begin by expressing sadness and grief and my delegation's sincere condolences to our colleague, the Ambassador of France, for the appalling murder of children and a teacher in a Hebrew school yesterday in Toulouse, as well as for the appalling murder of innocent soldiers, including a Moroccan, that took place several days earlier in the same region.

I would like to join with you, Mr. President, in expressing my condolences to the Ambassador of Egypt on the passing of Pope Shenouda and to say that we share the sadness and grief felt by the Egyptian people, especially the Copts on this occasion.

Mr. President, I would like to congratulate you on behalf of the Kingdom of Morocco on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I assure you of my delegation's active support for efforts to achieve our common objective of restoring the important role of our Conference and its effectiveness as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum.

The Kingdom of Morocco is confident that your long diplomatic experience and tact, together with your openness to dialogue, will go a long way towards ensuring progress in the work of our Conference.

I also take this opportunity to pay tribute to your predecessor, Mr. Hisham Badr, Ambassador of Egypt, who, as a result of his transparent and inclusive management of the Conference, as well as his commitment, was able to bring us that much closer to adopting a programme of work at the current session.

The innovative proposal of Egypt, as contained in document CD/1933/Rev.1, could have been the catalyst we were all waiting for in order to revitalize the Conference on Disarmament, engage it once more in substantive work and ultimately restore its mandated role as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum.

However, document CD/1933/Rev.1 has three drawbacks. The first is that it does not establish a clear and unambiguous mandate to negotiate a nuclear disarmament convention that would prohibit the development, manufacture and use of nuclear weapons and provide for an action plan for their destruction within not more than 25 years, thus responding to the appeal of the Non-Aligned Movement. The second concerns the differences in the mandates conferred upon the four thematic working groups. The last is the lack of a special coordinator to examine the issue so dear to my country: enlarging the Conference to include the States Members of the United Nations that might wish to join and to open it up to civil society.

I would also add another drawback, the one that Mr. Tokayev has already mentioned in his document, which is the idea of opening up the Conference on Disarmament for debates on topical subjects other than the ones on its agenda, in particular the issue of nuclear terrorism.

Despite the limitations of this document (CD/1933/Rev.1), the Kingdom of Morocco stood ready to approve the adoption of the programme of work proposed by Egypt, since it was aware of the pressing need for the Conference on Disarmament to take up its substantive work without delay and of the fact that the current situation profoundly diminishes its importance.

Through the statement that I delivered in this very place on 7 December 2011, Morocco expressed support for a programme of work that was as simplified as possible and that would enable each of the working groups to establish its own mandate, the aim being to overcome differences. To that end, I called on the members of the Conference on

Disarmament to make painful but politically responsible concessions in order to set the scene for negotiations on the four core themes of the Conference, through the working groups, without apprehension and without prejudging the results of their work. Morocco remains convinced that there are no irresolvable problems. It does not wish to be a party to the marginalization of the Conference or its dissolution.

Based on this same conviction, we are of the view that the constructive ambiguities introduced by the Ambassador of Egypt in his document (CD/1933/Rev.1) respond to this call. The proposal of Egypt does not, in fact, prevent any of the working groups from entering into negotiations on multilateral treaties on nuclear disarmament, fissile material, negative security assurances or the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

It is in this spirit that we appeal to you, Mr. President, to pursue consultations on document CD/1933/Rev.1 in order to unlock the magic formula that, without purporting to satisfy every member of our Conference, will have the merit of responding to the legitimate expectations of the international community in the area of nuclear disarmament and will thus enable our Conference to reclaim its primary vocation as a multilateral disarmament negotiating forum.

In my statement of 7 February, I announced that the Kingdom of Morocco was preparing for the Marrakech meeting of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism to be held from 13 to 16 February in cooperation with the two co-chairs, the United States of America and the Russian Federation, as well as with Spain in its capacity as Implementation and Assessment Group Coordinator. I am honoured to report to the members of the Conference on Disarmament on the deliberations held during this important event which attests to the willingness of Morocco to participate in the international effort to combat nuclear terrorism and to prevent malicious acts involving nuclear or radioactive materials.

The Marrakech meeting, which was attended by 250 international experts from partner nations of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, drew attention to the fact that the security challenges related to the global dimension of the nuclear threat cannot be addressed effectively without the establishment of close cooperation at the regional and international levels.

The participants recognized the vital importance of setting up coordinated, community response plans to deal with malicious acts involving nuclear and radioactive materials, and deemed it imperative to explore the best options and means of communication in the event of nuclear or radioactive attacks or incidents.

The subjects of the crucial role of the media in raising public awareness, the importance of information systems for enhanced cooperation between various agencies, and the identification of appropriate medical treatment for victims were also explored at the Marrakech meeting.

The meeting, which was held on the eve of the second Nuclear Security Summit, scheduled for next week in Seoul, in the Republic of Korea, provided an opportunity to consider and finalize the draft working documents prepared by the three implementation and assessment groups.

The Nuclear Detection Working Group, presided over by the Netherlands, finalized the Best Practices Guide, which provides a general framework for the implementation of a national strategy on the detection of illicit trafficking of radioactive and nuclear materials. The Guide contains proposals on effective mechanisms to raise awareness among relevant actors of the imperative requirement of nuclear security. It encourages the organization and implementation of training programmes and drills and the sharing of information and national experiences relating to nuclear detection.

The Nuclear Forensics Working Group, presided over by Australia, finalized its draft document entitled “Basic principles of nuclear forensics for policymakers”. This document was written to inform, and raise awareness among, relevant actors about the use of nuclear forensics and to strengthen national capacities through the sharing of best practices.

Morocco, which coordinates the Response and Mitigation Working Group, presented information on the background to and mandate of the document on the response to and mitigation of nuclear incidents. The document addresses the need to undertake large-scale assessments of international capabilities in order to improve and increase the effectiveness of technical capability monitoring, coordination efforts and responses to radiological and nuclear incidents. The Moroccan document contains proposals on the establishment and implementation of an integrated national framework for emergency responses based on harmonized systems for the mitigation of emergencies involving trafficking in radioactive materials.

In the view of all the participants, the outcome of the Marrakech meeting makes a significant contribution to the work of the second Nuclear Security Summit, which will be held next week in Seoul.

I would be remiss if I concluded without expressing the hope that the momentum created by the partners of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism will inspire our Conference and enable it to end the impasse that has crippled it for more than 15 years, which is far too long.

Mr. Okeyo (Kenya): I would also like to take this opportunity to express our heartfelt condolences to the families and friends of those who were recently shot and killed in France. I would also like to express my condolences on the demise of the Pope in Egypt. It is a tragedy for many Christians in Kenya and all over the world.

Mr. President, let me congratulate you, first as my neighbour and very special friend of Kenya, Ethiopia, on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament today.

I would like to also commend your predecessor, the most energetic and active ambassador in Geneva today, Ambassador Hisham Badr of Egypt, for his efforts in trying to establish a programme of work. I know it has not been easy. However, my delegation remains optimistic.

Mr. President, I assure you of the support of my delegation in your work and hope that we will eventually be able to adopt a programme of work of the Conference on Disarmament. I know people from Ethiopia sometimes do wonders. I even see that in the marathons; sometimes they beat Kenyans in the marathon. So I expect those traits to be displayed during this session you are chairing so that, after 15 years, we can find a way forward for the first time. It is really unfortunate that we have been unable to begin substantive work, despite our numerous statements of commitment to pursuing disarmament.

Kenya fully supports multilateral diplomacy in the field of disarmament. We support General Assembly resolution 64/34 of 2009, on “Promotion of multilateralism in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation”. My delegation reaffirms the importance of the Conference as the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament, as mandated by the first special session on disarmament, and expresses disappointment about the failure of the Conference to undertake substantive work on its agenda.

Kenya believes nuclear disarmament remains our highest priority in the field of disarmament. We reaffirm our commitment to the total elimination of nuclear weapons. We

are convinced the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of nuclear weapons.

The continued lack of consensus on the multilateral agenda and machinery is a matter of great concern to my country. If you just take a moment and reflect: all these brains around the table. If you ask a lobbying agency in the United States how much it would cost per hour for each one of us to be sitting here, it will not be less than \$100 per hour. So, imagine for the whole day, you will sit here charging your taxpayer \$100 per hour, and you have been doing this for 15 years, and you want to continue doing the same. No, my country does not accept this and because of that, we support the convening of a fourth special session of the United Nations General Assembly to focus on the disarmament machinery.

Finally, once again, I reiterate Kenya's commitment to the multilateral negotiation process in the field of disarmament.

Mr. Hoffmann (Germany): At the outset, I wish to express our heartfelt condolences on what one can, I think, only call a terrorist murder of children and a teacher and soldiers.

Mr. President, on behalf on the German delegation, I wish to congratulate you on the assumption of the presidency. We wish you every success in your endeavours and I assure you of our full support.

I also wish to take the opportunity to thank your predecessor, Ambassador Hisham Badr, for his enormous efforts in trying to hammer out a compromise for a programme of work everybody should have been able to live with. I would like to express our profound appreciation to Ambassador Badr and the delegation of Egypt for having made this determined attempt which should, indeed, have allowed us to overcome 15 years of impasse. We regret profoundly that, once again, these efforts have come to nothing because of the opposition of one member State, the same one which has made it impossible to implement the programme of work adopted by consensus in 2009.

What had been put before us in CD/1933/Rev.1 represented a compromise. Many in this chamber were not enthusiastic about it, because they felt that important elements of their position were not covered in a way which would have fully satisfied them. For instance, my delegation would have preferred to see the word "negotiate" with regard to defining the task of ending the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons purposes and dealing with related matters. But many among us, including the German delegation, were ready to put their reservations aside, particularly with a view to safeguarding the future of this forum. Many, including my delegation, felt that the compromise which was put before us was crafted in a way where all sides could see their positions protected in a reasonable and professional way and that one could leave it to the future negotiations to find out how and where solutions for difficult issues might be found.

After 15 years of stalemate, it is patently clear that it is only by approaching the issue of the work programme in this kind of way that we can actually enter into negotiations dealing with substantive work. It is a matter of serious regret that one member State seems to believe that it can continue singlehandedly to keep the central institution in multilateral disarmament in a situation of permanent standstill.

In a forum which is governed by the consensus rule, everyone has all the possibilities to safeguard their security interests in the actual negotiations on future legal instruments. Furthermore, assuming for the sake of argument that a State felt that its security concerns had not been fully taken into account in the negotiation of a draft treaty, it remains free to join it or not to do so or to join it at a later stage. It would certainly not be the first time in modern history that something like this would happen, as all who work in

the field of disarmament and non-proliferation are well aware. Therefore, the arguments we heard about grave security concerns allegedly making it impossible to allow the beginning of a process which would deal with the elements of an FMCT and related matters do not strike us as convincing at all. In actual fact, it is quite obvious that what we are confronted with here is an attempt to hold the Conference hostage to issues which are not in the remit of the Conference and thus cannot be solved in this forum. When everybody else is ready to engage, one is sorry to have to say that this kind of approach does not represent the multilateral spirit which is needed to make advances in multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation possible.

It is most unfortunate that yet another opportunity was lost. One would have wished though that more delegations would have actively indicated their wish and expectation that no one object to CD/1933/Rev.1 rather than just wait in silence and see what would happen if it was put forward for adoption. Such a modus operandi does not strike one as a particularly persuasive method of helping to get this body back to work.

Now, surely we will have to continue in our search to arrive at a programme of work which allows us to finally start the substantive work we are mandated to do, but experience would suggest that it will take a while to digest the latest blow before a new attempt will be made.

Mr. President, this brings me to the ideas you have outlined at the outset of this meeting for your presidency, for which we are most grateful. We will study these ideas carefully, but by and large, I think I can say already at this point in time that we are happy to support the approach you suggest to the Conference.

As I said already, the programme of work must remain an issue we continue to focus on for the very simple reason that this remains the most fundamental task we have to solve to enable us to start our substantive work. At the same time, all items on our agenda should be discussed in plenary meetings, allowing us to compare notes once again about potential new developments in views and positions. Since the Conference has once again not managed to get its substantive work under way, the topic of the revitalization of the Conference deserves renewed attention as well in our discussions. It would appear useful if you, Mr. President, could suggest specific dates for plenary meetings on certain topics so that we can have some useful order in our proceedings, allowing us to prepare interventions accordingly. If such a calendar could be coordinated with the following presidencies for the remainder of the 2012 session, this would certainly make things even more efficient.

Mr. Yusnier Romero Puentes (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to recognize the work carried out by the Ambassador of Egypt and his excellent performance as President. We are convinced that his contribution, as reflected in document CD/1933, will serve as a basis for future discussions that will make it possible to create an even more finely balanced text and in so doing advance the work of this Conference.

We wish to state that we welcome your assumption of the presidency of this important forum, and we do so with an awareness of your experience and confidence in your ability to direct our work in these genuinely difficult circumstances for the Conference.

Mr. President, my country stands ready to work closely with you in whatever manner you deem most appropriate. We therefore offer you our support and cooperation in that endeavour from this moment onwards.

Allow me, then, to congratulate you once more on your assumption of the presidency of this forum, and to express my best wishes for your success and my country's unrelenting support for Ethiopia, which we view as a brother nation.

Mr. Khelif (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, the delegation of Algeria should like to join you, Mr. President, and the previous speakers in extending its condolences to the delegation of France in the wake of the appalling crime, or rather the appalling crimes, which claimed the lives of children and adults in front of a school in the Toulouse area, and also the earlier crime, committed in the same area, in which members of the French army lost their lives. We should also like to express our heartfelt sorrow and to extend our condolences to the delegation of Egypt following the sad death of Pope Shenouda.

Mr. President, the delegation of Algeria takes pleasure in congratulating you on your vision as the representative of Ethiopia, a friendly African State and member of the Group of 21 and the Non-Aligned Movement, and as you assume this heavy responsibility in these trying circumstances. We call it a heavy responsibility because of the sense of frustration prevailing at the Conference in the light of the failure of the negotiations led by your predecessor, the Ambassador of Egypt, who made valiant efforts to reach consensus on a programme of work. We take this opportunity to express our profound gratitude to your predecessor, the Ambassador of Egypt, and to his delegation, for their efforts. We assure you of our full support as you seek to arrive at a consensus text that can be used as a basis for commencing our substantive work and, hopefully, for establishing a comprehensive and balanced programme of work. We should say, from the outset, that the delegation of Algeria continues to believe that document CD/1864 is a fundamental starting point: it presents the most recent agreement that was reached by the Conference in 2009 and is a good starting point for the establishment of a comprehensive and balanced programme of work.

We listened to your comments with great interest and felt that there were three main issues that you wish to focus on during your presidency. The first is that of commencing discussions on the agenda items, particularly the four core issues. The second is beginning consultations on the revitalization of the Conference on Disarmament. The third is pursuing discussions on subjects other than the four core issues. At this plenary meeting, we should like to present you with our preliminary views on these three points.

First, on the subject of commencing discussions on the agenda items and the four core issues, the delegation of Algeria fully supports you as you endeavour to come up with a consensus text that would be endorsed by the Conference on Disarmament and that would set a timetable for the substantive work on the agenda items. Some parties may question the usefulness of such discussions and their potential added value, given that the Conference has been discussing the agenda items every year since 2004. Some say that it would only take up more effort and time without producing any of the desired results. The delegation of Algeria takes the view that what we should be aiming for this year is substantive work that takes us forward with respect to the experiments that we have undertaken in recent years. In other words, we should like the discussions at formal sessions to be documented in reports annexed to the Conference's annual report. We assume this fits in with your proposal and approach, Mr. President. We offer you our full support. This approach may not be sufficiently ambitious to meet our expectations, considering the resolutions adopted and requests addressed to us by the General Assembly. At the same time, however, since the Conference is not ready to take a decision on the Egyptian proposal or any other proposal, we cannot give up. We have to explore every avenue in order to begin the substantive work.

On the second point, the delegation of Algeria is willing to take part in negotiations to revitalize the work of the Conference, particularly with regard to procedural issues, if a decision on this topic is taken during the discussions. However, we have to be frank, Mr. President. As the delegation of Algeria has said here at the Conference and at the General Assembly, we do not consider the problem facing the Conference to be essentially a procedural problem; it is a political problem. In our view, even if we were to hold

consultations and adopt decisions on procedural matters, the problem of agreeing on a comprehensive and balanced programme of work would not be resolved.

On the third point — consultations on subjects other than the four core issues — we consider the agenda that we adopted at the first meeting at the beginning of the year, together with the annexed presidential statement, to be sufficiently comprehensive and flexible to allow any delegation here to make any proposal that it wishes to make about security issues that it feels need to be addressed at the Conference. Here, I refer to items 5, 6 and 7 on the agenda, which are written in flexible language that allows for discussion of such issues.

Lastly, Mr. President, we again assure you that the delegation of Algeria stands ready to support you in your efforts to take our work forward and to arrive at a consensus text on which the Conference can draw in order to decide on how to proceed for the rest of the year. We do not wish to spend a year doing nothing; the Conference is in great danger of having its credibility undermined even further. We hope that we will be able to reach a decision before the end of the first part of our session so that delegations will have time to prepare for the second part of the session and will be able to participate actively in the discussions and the substantive work.

Mr. Mucheka (Zimbabwe): We would like to join others in expressing heartfelt condolences to France and Egypt for the tragic events which have recently taken place in those countries.

At the outset, Zimbabwe would like to congratulate Ethiopia, a fellow African country and a member of the Group of 21, on assuming the third presidency of the Conference for the 2012 session. Our sincere appreciation goes to the Egyptian president, your predecessor, for his exemplary leadership skills during his tenure. We commend the enormous effort Ambassador Badr put into tabling the draft programme of work, CD/1933/Rev.1, despite the fact that it could not garner the necessary consensus to enable the Conference to resume substantive work. My delegation would like to take this opportunity to also commend the work done by the Ecuadorian president, the first president for the 2012 session.

Mr. President, with your able leadership and diplomatic skills, we hope that the Conference will be in a position to adopt a programme of work to start negotiations on multilateral disarmament treaties. Negotiating disarmament treaties is the core business of the Conference. Zimbabwe believes that the Conference remains the most relevant body to undertake such negotiations.

Mr. President, please be assured of Zimbabwe's full support and cooperation during your presidency.

Mr. Pedro Oyarce (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, my delegation would like to join with others in expressing our condolences to the Ambassador of France for the tragic events which took place in his country and which seriously undermine the harmony, tolerance and dialogue needed in today's world. We would also like to ask the Ambassador of Egypt to convey our sympathies to the Coptic community.

Before making a few brief comments, I would like to thank the Ambassador of Egypt and his team for their efforts to produce an innovative proposal in the midst of a complex situation. Their proposal gave rise to expectations, inasmuch as it was characterized by realism, ease of implementation and a third component — constructive ambiguity — which, as we all know, is required in delicate situations in order to achieve political compromise.

Although we will refrain from referring to the strengths or weaknesses offered by the proposal, the latter represented an important step in helping to resolve a stubborn

problem in this forum. Mr. President, you take up the reins of the Conference at what is undeniably a critical juncture and one that follows a round of appeals at the highest level for this forum to begin its substantive work. The fact is that the Conference has not been able to approve a programme of work and, although this is probably not the time to analyse whether internal or external factors are at fault, the challenge to do so remains a collective task, not one that is reserved exclusively for presidents. It is a collective task because such is the essence of the multilateral culture. In addition, it is an issue that will continue to be a serious cause for concern.

It will probably be necessary to take time out for reflection, as stated by the Ambassador of Germany, and for the most part, this is an appropriate and sensible approach. You have suggested that we undertake substantive debate on fundamental issues, followed by consultations on revitalization. We would be interested in having specific dates for this in order to prepare adequately, given that we are a small and modest country. This is a process of debate and reflection in which all countries — those with more power and those with less, such as my own — can participate.

The most reasonable course of action in this situation, Mr. President, seems to be to cooperate with each other and to facilitate your job, with the clear understanding that we are embarking on a path that will probably lead us to some level of decision-making at the next General Assembly.

We must be prepared politically for that. The alternative, in our humble opinion, would be to formalize inaction, and it is almost certain that current political conditions will not support such an alternative. We must continue our efforts to maintain the Conference on Disarmament. Moreover, we should also include in the revitalization debate the words addressed to us several weeks ago in this meeting room by the Secretary-General of the Conference. In my view, they, too, deserve consideration, because they can be part of a constructive approach to resolving the current political deadlock. At this stage, Mr. President, I assure you of my delegation's full cooperation.

Mr. Badr (Egypt): Mr. President, at the outset I would like to express, as you have expressed, our condolences to the French people for the terrorist incident in Toulouse. I thank you and all the members who have extended their condolences to the people of Egypt on the demise of Pope Shenouda. Indeed, he was a great Egyptian, a great Egyptian leader, and we are going to miss him for his leadership and for his wisdom.

I would also like to congratulate you Ambassador Getahun, not only as a dear brother and a fellow African and a G21 non-aligned country, but, as you know, because Egypt and Ethiopia are tied together by history and geography and the Nile, which are the bonds of Egyptian solidarity with Ethiopia and cooperation that will remain forever between our two peoples. I want to assure you of Egypt's full support for your presidency in whatever ideas you present. We will be there with you to support you and to help in the success of your presidency.

I would like, lastly, to thank all the delegations and those who have expressed appreciation to the Egyptian delegation during the presidency, and to thank you from the bottom of my heart for their very kind words to us.

The President: I thank Ambassador Badr of Egypt for his statement, for his kind words, including those reaffirming the close ties between our two countries. I reiterate our sense of sadness on the passing of Pope Shenouda, who was very critical in further enhancing the relations between our two countries.

Ms. Kennedy (United States of America): Mr. President, let me also add my personal condolences on the horrific massacres in France, as well as the death of Pope

Shenouda, a revered religious figure and a symbol of tolerance. At the most senior levels of my Government, condolences were offered on both of these occasions.

Let me also offer my congratulations to our distinguished new President, Ambassador Getahun, and to pledge our support for your efforts. This is a difficult juncture, coming as it does after the truly heroic efforts of our equally distinguished colleague from Egypt.

I missed the events of last week because I had been called back to Washington by my Secretary of State to attend a conference of all ambassadors. I will note the statement that was issued by the Secretary of State's spokeswoman expressing disappointment that Pakistan was not willing to join consensus on a way forward that, as others have noted, certainly represented a major compromise. I also wanted to note the appreciation expressed in that same statement for the efforts of Ambassador Badr.

Now, it is indeed time to reassess how we can revitalize the efforts to move forward on multilateral disarmament because that, frankly, is the goal rather than any one institution that should be the focus of our collective efforts.

So, Mr. President, we will indeed look very carefully at the ideas that you have sketched out today and, of course, will work as closely as we can with you and our fellow members of this Conference.

Mr. Simon-Michel (France) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, I asked for the floor in order to thank you for your comments and for the condolences that you so kindly addressed to my country. I would also like to thank my colleagues for their expressions of solidarity in the wake of the atrocious and barbaric acts to which my country has just been subjected.

I would also like to convey to the Ambassador of Egypt my delegation's sadness at the passing of Pope Shenouda III, and I take advantage of this opportunity to thank Hisham Badr for his considerable efforts to bring us closer to consensus during the month of his presidency, which has now come to an end. We have never again been as close to reaching a consensus as was the case in 2009, when we had managed to adopt a programme of work (CD/1864). Nearly all countries, including my own, had worked hard and made concessions in order to arrive at that consensus, and my delegation certainly regrets deeply that it was not possible to adopt document CD/1933.

Lastly, Mr. President, I would like to wish you every success in your presidency. You may count on the support of France in your efforts to revitalize our Conference.

Ms. Adamson (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): Mr. President, I wish to add my voice to those who have expressed condolences to the Ambassador of France and the Ambassador of Egypt. I will not repeat the words of others, but I send my heartfelt condolences on both of those events.

Congratulations, Ambassador Getahun, on assuming the presidency. It is a difficult time, but it is not a time for surrender and it is not a time to be defeatist.

I wish to join others who have thanked Ambassador Badr for his efforts. I said at the beginning of his presidency that my delegation would work with him and I was glad to be able to work with him and his team. I think what he managed to do was the equivalent of threading a camel through the eye of a needle and he had threaded several camels through several needles, which would have helped us, sewers and weavers — the people who had volunteered to help lead different activities — to make a tapestry. Now, it might have been quite a chaotic and crazy tapestry, as we were starting off, but I think many of us were ready to put that tapestry together.

My delegation had reservations about CD/1933. I will not go into them – our positions were well known, but we could have joined consensus for three reasons: because we value multilateralism; because we want to do disarmament; and because we value compromise. I think, looking ahead to the next period, we will approach it in the same spirit and I think there could be some things we can already do as we consider your proposals, without spending too much time discussing the philosophy of them. We can together try to plan through till September, hoping that the P6 will work together. So let us look at a timetable to cover the whole period, using whatever formula we can come up with to guide our work.

My delegation does not think that a simple repeat of what we have done before — just having substantive discussions in plenary format as we have done in the past — will take us further along the track to what we are looking for. We perhaps need to look again at how we do our work and I am wondering whether the people who had stepped up to be the weavers and volunteered — Egypt, Switzerland and others — might be willing to help in a leadership role on different topics. I am wondering if we need to work a little bit more as we do in the First Committee, where we have somebody championing a particular cause rather than just having speeches across a plenary. So, I think there are creative ways in which we can look ahead in the remaining few months of the session.

But I want to thank you once again, Mr. President, and thank Ambassador Badr for the momentum he brought to us and I think, above all, we must try to keep that momentum going for the sake of multilateralism, for the sake of disarmament and for the sake of compromise.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): Mr. President, at the outset, I would like to congratulate you on assuming the presidency. We wish you success in your efforts and assure you of our continued cooperation.

I would also like to join all my colleagues in extending our condolences both to the Ambassadors of France and Egypt.

With regard to the presidency of my friend, Hisham Badr, I already expressed our appreciation and admiration for his efforts. It is regrettable that, in the end, Pakistan was not able to join consensus on his ably crafted document, but, as I have explained in the past, there are certain areas in which constructive ambiguity is not sufficient to protect national interests.

It was not my intention to take the floor this morning. I take the floor in reference to the comments made by my colleague and friend, the Ambassador of Germany, who had the delicacy not to mention my country's name. But I think it is no secret that his reference was to Pakistan, and I feel no difficulty in taking responsibility for our actions, because we believe that what we are doing for the sake of our security is nothing less and nothing more than any other country would do to protect their own national security interests. Therefore, I have nothing to be ashamed of. In fact, I am proud to take the position that I have.

My German friend has the benefit of speaking for a country that enjoys the privilege of a nuclear umbrella under the extended deterrence provided by NATO. Hence Germany can afford to speak brave words about deterrence, about disarmament, about arms control, about non-proliferation. It reminds me somewhat of a situation of a person being most generous with other people's money.

It is also worth recalling, as has been noted, that consensus has eluded us on FMCT for the last 15 years. Pakistan's position against the FMCT has been there since 2009, not for the last 15 years. So, we need to ask which country or countries were responsible for blocking consensus for those 15 years. For our part, we are well aware of which countries were responsible for that. But I have not seen a statement made by Germany during those

15 years or, say, during the period before 2009, in which blame was ascribed to the country responsible at that time.

I would be very happy to be corrected, but our reading of the records of the Conference proceedings over the last 15 years certainly demonstrates that no such comments were made in criticism of the country responsible for blocking progress and consensus on the FMCT since 1998.

It is true that Pakistan has blocked consensus on the FMCT, but it is also true, as we have stated several times, that we have taken this position because we are compelled by our security considerations to do so. Pakistan did not create those security considerations. So, we are forced, compelled, to respond to an objective reality that has confronted us, especially since 2009 when it became apparent what direction we are heading in as regards the security in our region. So, our opposition to the FMCT arises from our security concerns, which have not been created as a result of Pakistan's actions.

The record also shows that, while Pakistan has objected to negotiations on FMCT, there are three other so-called core issues on our agenda: nuclear disarmament, negative security assurances and PAROS. Pakistan has not blocked consensus on those issues, nor have we opposed negotiations on any of these three issues. We are ready to negotiate one or all three. The fact that we are not in a position to do so is because there are objections to such negotiations by some other countries. So, if you want to count the number of countries that are blocking progress in the Conference on Disarmament then, in addition to Pakistan, there are at least three others. Why do we not recognize that?

And then, finally, the point that my German friend made, that a country's security is not the business of the Conference on Disarmament. I find that extremely difficult to believe, because the Conference does not work in a vacuum. We are not in some kind of gilded cage where we work in total isolation from what is happening in the real world. And if we were, then why have we not been able to negotiate nuclear disarmament for the last 30 years, which is the *raison d'être* of the Conference in the first place? It is simple: because certain countries do not feel that it is in their security interest to negotiate nuclear disarmament, that is why. So to argue that Pakistan should not be guided by its security interests when it comes to FMCT is a totally false pretence.

Added to this, and related to it, is the issue that a country's security concerns can be addressed during the process of negotiations. Let us accept that as a truism. Why then, can we not also negotiate nuclear disarmament, or negative security assurances, or PAROS, if those countries whose security interests are going to be disturbed or undermined by such negotiations, can also protect their security interests during the process of negotiations on all three items, or on any one of those three items?

The underlying point is that you cannot have double standards. You cannot ask Pakistan to do something which you, or your friends, are not prepared to do either. We know you are from developed countries and we know that Pakistan is an underdeveloped country, but our minds are not underdeveloped. We can think rationally. We can think logically. We can think for ourselves.

Mr. Hoffman (Germany): Mr. President, I would very much like to thank my good friend and colleague from Pakistan for his immediate response. I think this is how it should be. We should have a real exchange in this chamber and not so much the reading out of well-known prepared statements.

Now, can I say, we are not talking about adopting a draft treaty here, where I would very easily and very quickly understand that any delegation would say, you know this draft treaty may not be sufficiently in line with the fundamental security interests of the State I am representing. We are talking about the opening of a process. We are talking about the

opening of negotiations. I still fail to understand why Pakistan's security interests should be really jeopardized by the opening of such a process. I have tried in my prepared statement to make a few points about why I do not find this convincing, and I continue not to find it convincing.

Now, the Ambassador of Pakistan has put the question of whether the German delegation has in the past complained about the fact that other possible draft work programmes were not adopted. I have to say I myself have not checked the record so closely, but I would assume that the case where 64 members of this body, that is to say all except one, could have lived with a draft programme of work, and only one continues to object, I suppose this has not happened before, but I am certainly happy to check the record. I think this is an unusual situation and, in a number of statements in recent weeks and months, I have deliberately focused a little bit on this fundamental question: how do you behave in a multilateral environment? There is an expectation that one should make one's contribution to multilateralism, and I think one takes upon oneself quite a heavy responsibility by blocking the opening of a negotiation process when the rest of the international community would actually like to engage in one. For it is not only 64 States in the Conference on Disarmament; we are talking about the General Assembly as well, which has adopted certain resolutions in that regard.

I fear that the Ambassador of Pakistan may have slightly misunderstood what I wanted to say when he said that I had allegedly argued that it is not the Conference's business to deal with security concerns of countries. Absolutely, this is quite clear – but it is not a question of States bringing extraneous issues into this forum which cannot be resolved in this forum, but whether they use this forum to arrive at decisions in other forums, and this is a very separate matter.

Again, I appreciate this exchange because I think this is what may help us over the longer term to actually make progress.

The President: I am grateful for the numerous statements supporting the Ethiopian presidency. Most importantly, I am grateful for quite a number of concrete comments and proposals on the way forward.

I would like to ask the regional coordinators to make arrangements for me to see their groups. I will also be available for consultations with individual members, with observer States and civil society representatives, on the way forward.

This concludes our business for today. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be on Tuesday, 27 March at 10 a.m. At that time, the Foreign Minister of Mongolia will address the Conference and two colleagues will bid farewell.

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.