
Conference on Disarmament

22 March 2011

English

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

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 22 March 2011, at 10.25 a.m.

President: Mr. Wang Qun(China)

The President: I now declare open the 1217th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Procedurally, I think that, first of all, I will, in my capacity as the President, make an opening statement, to be followed by general statements by member States, and after that, I am envisaging taking care of housekeeping business. And, lastly, once we have done the above, I am envisaging having the remaining plenary devoted to an exchange of views on the programme of work of the Conference – particularly on a question, I think, important in the context of the programme of work, that is, the non-starter for a programme of work, but nevertheless, I will first of all have my opening statement.

(continued in Chinese)

The current momentum toward a renaissance in international arms control and disarmament is clear. The international community generally wishes to see multilateral disarmament, especially the work of the Conference, revitalized so as to help achieve a goal of security for all through dialogue and mutually beneficial cooperation. To this end, political support for the Conference has increased across the board. Chinese President Hu Jintao and U.S. President Obama have expressed their support for the work of the Conference on many occasions. United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has paid three visits to the Conference in 2011. In addition, more than 24 ministers and dignitaries have come to address us since the beginning of the year, calling for efforts to break the deadlock in the Conference at the earliest possible date.

I have had nearly 40 bilateral consultations with various parties in the Conference prior to assuming the presidency. My overall feeling and impression from those consultations is that on the one hand the parties concerned are still far apart and the Conference will have difficulty in breaking its present impasse.

On the other hand, vis-à-vis last year, all parties have demonstrated greater political will with more constructive attitudes this year. Under the leadership of my predecessors, the distinguished Ambassadors of Canada and Chile, the Conference started off on a very good footing and conducted its work in a very structured and orderly manner. Personally I have learned a lot from the excellent work they have done.

As a permanent member of the Security Council and one of the five nuclear-weapon States, as well as a major developing country, China is deeply honoured to assume the Presidency of the Conference at this juncture. Furthermore, we are keenly aware of the historical responsibility we have undertaken. Let me assure you of China's readiness to fully cooperate with all parties in a concerted effort to start the substantive work of the Conference as soon as possible so as to promote the multilateral disarmament process.

For its part, China will carry out its responsibilities as President of the Conference on the basis of the following principles: first, giving fair, impartial and equal weight to the concerns of each State, and dealing with all core agenda items in a balanced way so as to create a good atmosphere for the advancement of the Conference's work; second, safeguarding the authority of the Conference and its traditions of democracy and the rule of law, and conducting the work in strict accordance with its rules of procedures; third, ensuring an open and transparent intergovernmental process and relying on the collective efforts of all States members of the Conference; and fourth, seeking common ground and focusing on effectiveness and goals, while reserving differences so as to detect and identify any evolving consensus while maintaining positive momentum.

To advance the work of the Conference, I would like to share with you my thoughts and general ideas about my workplan for China's Presidency on the basis of having carefully listened to the views of all concerned.

Firstly, on the Conference track, I envisage having three plenary meetings to discuss the programme of work, in order to explore our maximum common denominators. In the meantime, I envisage continuing our substantive discussions on the various agenda items of the Conference. Apart from our discussion on the four core agenda items, I also envisage making the appropriate arrangements to allow our delegations to exchange views on such issues as new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems for such weapons, radiological weapons, comprehensive programmes of disarmament and transparency in armaments, as well as expansion of membership in the Conference and participation of civil societies in its work.

Secondly, to ensure the quality of the aforementioned discussions, China will continue to maintain close communication and consultations with as many members as possible, including other P6 members and original coordinators.

Thirdly, China values the important role and contributions of the observer States in advancing the multilateral disarmament process. We look forward to having intensified contact with them and to exchanging views on the question of the expansion of membership in the Conference.

Fourthly, China attaches importance to the role of civil society and will engage in dialogue and communication on relevant issues with representatives of civil society and the media.

Such good momentum is not easy at all to come by for the Conference, and we should therefore treasure it all the more. Let us join hands and work together to achieve the early reactivation of the substantive work of the Conference, on all fronts, in promotion of international arms control, disarmament and the non-proliferation process.

Thank you all.

(continued in English)

In the context of a general statement, I now recognize the distinguished ambassador of Senegal. The floor is open, distinguished ambassador of Senegal.

Mr. Fodé Seck (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, since I am taking the floor for the first time in this august body, let me convey my warmest congratulations to you on assuming the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and wish you every success in carrying out your mandate. You may rest assured of the firm support and the full and total cooperation of the Senegalese delegation in this connection, particularly in respect of any initiatives and steps that you may decide to take so as to break the deadlock in the negotiations that we have witnessed for too long now.

My congratulations also go to your two immediate predecessors, namely our eminent colleagues from Canada and Chile, for the talent, professionalism and transparency with which they conducted the work of the Conference at the start of this 2011 session.

Furthermore, in the light of the condolences conveyed by my Government to the Government of Japan, I would like to convey to our distinguished colleague, Ambassador Akio Suda, and through him to his Government and the entire Japanese people, the deep and sincere condolences of all the staff at the Permanent Mission of Senegal in Geneva for the heavy losses, especially of human lives, that the great Japanese people have suffered following the terrible natural disasters that have hit the country.

Mr. President, at the outset, I wish to state loudly and clearly on behalf of my country, Senegal, that there is nothing inevitable about the stalemate in the negotiations of the Conference on Disarmament – a stalemate that has endured for more than a decade. This phenomenon of marking time which we have all observed and regret stems, in the view of my delegation, from a clear lack of political will and therefore of transparency that

is unfortunately, linked to the specific interests of all parties and is to the great detriment of what is generally understood as being in the interest of all, namely the interests of the community of nations and peoples and the interests of mankind as a whole.

This is precisely what the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, was saying when, at the opening of the present session of the Conference on Disarmament on 28 January, he underlined that if the current stalemate continues it will have adverse repercussions for our world, and he urged all Member States to show more commitment to finding a way out of the situation.

This is why my delegation calls upon the members of the Conference to step up their efforts, at your side, under your presidency, Mr. President, so as to take advantage of the current international environment which is favourable towards making significant progress on the adoption of a consensus-based programme of work and also concerning the various issues covered in the Decalogue. In this connection, the non-paper containing the proposals of your predecessor, Ambassador Pedro Oyarce of Chile, constitutes a good basis, as it provides a simplified formula for a programme of work that takes due account of elements of the 2009 programme of work, contained in document CD/1864.

At this juncture, as we state to consider the last three items on the agenda for this session, while reaffirming the firm commitment of Senegal to general and total disarmament, I would like to call upon members of the Conference, particularly the manufacturing States, to be more transparent about the production and sale of weapons. My call is all the more urgent, as the manufacturers of such weapons are well aware of the untold devastation that their weapons cause in everyday life, particularly in developing countries which are not manufacturers, and whose civilian populations, economies, ecosystems and political stability are seriously affected. One way for States to show their commitment would be to declare their support and, better still, to actually take part in the negotiations to conclude an arms trade treaty.

My delegation will continue to take an active interest in the arms trade treaty project as well as in other matters, such as nuclear disarmament, including the conclusion of a legal instrument instead of mere unilateral declarations on the non-use of nuclear weapons. We will also pay due attention to regional disarmament, the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and zones of peace and cooperation, the universalization of conventions such as the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and the Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials, and of the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

Mr. President, because the different elements of the Decalogue are all of equal importance for Senegal, my delegation would like to reiterate here the call by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries to convene, without delay, a special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament in the hope that States, international organizations, civil society and other stakeholders will manage, through a comprehensive and pragmatic approach to breathe new life into all of the bodies dealing with disarmament, in particular the Conference on Disarmament, whose role as the sole body for negotiations should be reaffirmed and consolidated.

This is an opportunity for me to applaud the very positive contribution made by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), for its continuous efforts through advocacy, information and training to encourage and facilitate the participation of the greatest possible number of actors in disarmament activities in general, and in the processes leading to arms control treaties in particular.

Lastly, Mr. President, I would like to make a point of welcoming the positive interaction that is developing between the Conference on Disarmament and civil society. This is an interaction that should be encouraged, so that, sooner or later, the membership of

the Conference on Disarmament can be expanded to include some civil society organizations.

The President: And now I give the floor to the distinguished Ambassador of Sri Lanka.

Ms. Senewiratne (Sri Lanka): At the outset, my delegation congratulates you, Ambassador Wang, on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. We are confident that your proven skills and extensive experience in the field of disarmament will guide the work of the Conference successfully. My delegation is pleased to see China, a country of the Asian region, presiding over this august body. We applaud the strides made and high standards maintained by China in the disarmament arena. The no-first-use policy advocated in 1964 reflects China's commitment to being a responsible nuclear-weapon State.

My delegation strongly supports the leading role played by China together with the Russian Federation towards negotiating a draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space, the threat or use of force against outer space objects, as presented in 2008. We welcome this initiative as a basis towards adopting an international binding instrument. Sri Lanka too has taken a keen interest in achieving this objective, and in this context Egypt and Sri Lanka have alternately been submitting to the General Assembly a resolution on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

Sri Lanka, like many others, continues to be concerned at the existence of nuclear weapons and their possible use or threat of use, as it poses a menace to humanity. Therefore, we join the collective voice for the elimination of nuclear weapons from national arsenals. Pending this achievement, we are of the view that there is an urgent need to reach an early agreement on a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. We encourage nuclear-weapon States to reduce nuclear danger through the de-alerting of nuclear weapons and diminishing the operational readiness of weapons systems. We stand ready to work within the framework of this body towards achieving this objective, as it is our joint commitment and responsibility to our peoples.

Sri Lanka fully supports your proposals to hold informal meetings of the Conference on its agenda with appointed coordinators. Constructive dialogue on the core issues would enable us to better arrive at a common understanding towards the adoption of a programme of work. I wish to reiterate our position that only through confidence-building and equal respect for the security of all member States we will be able to achieve that much-needed consensus towards this end.

Sri Lanka wishes you a successful term as President of the Conference, and pledges our fullest cooperation to you in your onerous task.

The President: Ambassador, I thank you for the kind words you addressed to me and also your important statement. And now I wish to give the floor to the distinguished Ambassador So of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Mr. So (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Mr. President, on behalf of my delegation I have to congratulate your assumption of the presidency. Just before in your statement, you highlighted that you really worked hard and you just showed your strong will to revitalize the work of the Conference. We fully appreciate that and you also mentioned your principles and the way of work during your presidency. If you work in that way on the principle of this and also in that way then I am sure that it will make a great contribution for the revitalization of the work of the Conference. My delegation is also ready to cooperate and support your work and in conclusion, in the name of my delegation, I wish you all the best and great success in your high office during your tenure.

The President: Thank you very much, Ambassador, and I also thank you for the kind words you addressed to me and your valuable inputs. And now I give the floor to Ambassador Hilale of Morocco.

Mr. Hilale (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, allow me first of all to extend the sincere condolences of the Kingdom of Morocco to our friends, the people of Japan, and our sincere and deep sympathy for all of the lives lost following the natural disasters caused by the earthquake and tsunami that hit the country, further exacerbated by nuclear incidents. We are saddened and dismayed by the scale of the terrible tragedy that has afflicted the Japanese people and would like to express our solidarity and sympathy.

Mr. President, I would also like to convey the congratulations of the Kingdom of Morocco on your accession to the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. Your experience, diplomatic skills, and the commitment of your country to disarmament are all guarantees that we will move forward with the work of the Conference. Rest assured, Mr. President, of our constructive contribution and our support.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate your predecessor, Mr. Pedro Oyarce our friend and Ambassador of Chile, on the excellent way in which he guided the work of the Conference during his term of office. His working methods and the transparency with which he guided our work gave rise to a fruitful and frank dialogue among members enabling a better understanding of the different positions.

Since time immemorial, the Kingdom of Morocco has advocated a pragmatic, balanced and progressive approach to the work of the Conference, with respect for its rules of procedure and working methods. It is against this backdrop that Morocco shares your idea of giving equal treatment to all of the agenda items which would take into account the positions of all the member States of the Conference.

We also support your plan to continue consultations for the swift adoption of the programme of work for 2011. We are in favour of a dialogue with observer States and better interaction with civil society, and are confident that civil society will certainly bring added value to the work of the Conference. Morocco is flexible on the format for this interaction, provided that the NGOs are selected on a case-by-case basis and in an objective fashion.

Concerning the holding of informal meetings on the various topics dealt with by the Conference on Disarmament, of which you gave details in document CD/WP.565, the Kingdom of Morocco supports this approach and is also in favour of appointing different ambassadors and colleagues present here, members of the Conference on Disarmament, to steer and chair these informal consultation meetings.

I will conclude by reaffirming to you, Mr. President, the commitment of my delegation to do everything in its power to make a positive and constructive contribution and above all, to strive to ensure that our programme of work can finally be adopted.

The President: Thank you, Mr. Ambassador, and thank you for your statement and also, at a time when you have to leave your office, I would like to wish you well in the coming days in your work and your life and also thank you very much for the contributions you made to the Conference. Thank you. And now I give the floor to the distinguished representative of Nigeria.

Mr. Laro (Nigeria): Mr. President, like others who have spoken before me, the Nigerian delegation would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency and through you also appreciate the efforts of your predecessors for guiding the work of the Conference to date.

Nigeria believes in and encourages all positive efforts that are aimed at moving the Conference out of its present deadlock. Nigeria also believes in the guiding principle of the rules of procedure as the basis for carrying out the work of the Conference. However, in carrying out consultations, which are laudable efforts, Nigeria would suggest that, like your predecessors Canada and Chile, efforts should be made to consult all delegations, as no delegation is key or more important in the Conference. It is the view of the Nigerian delegation, as encouraging as your proposed four-track approach of consultation is, that there should not be any preference in such consultations. In other words, based on the rules of consensus, all delegations should be treated equally in consultations.

Finally, allow me to also identify with other delegations to convey our deepest condolences to the Government and people of Japan over the disaster that has struck the country.

The President: Dear colleagues, on 21 March I distributed to the members, through the secretariat, a working document on arrangements for the work of the Conference during China's presidency. Now I wish to flesh out the rationale for such arrangements.

During the dozens of bilateral consultations I recently conducted, I sensed that all parties attach importance to the work of the Conference and earnestly hope that all our efforts to promote that work are channelled into the Conference, including the holding of serious and substantive discussion on important issues including FMCT. On the basis of careful consideration of the views of all parties, I suggest that in addition to the plenary, I envisage having discussions of the four core issues of the Conference in the format of informal meetings. In terms of substance and format I would like to stress that my ideas on informal meetings are virtually the same as those reflected in the arrangements laid out by the Belgian presidency last year in working document CD/WP.560. The reason for doing so is to avoid controversies based on the established and consensual approach by the Conference.

After prior consultations I would like to invite Ambassador Hannan of Bangladesh, Ambassador Soares of Brazil and Ambassador Kolostov of Belarus to be the coordinators respectively on nuclear disarmament, PAROS and on items 5 to 7.

Furthermore, to facilitate full preparation for and participation of all parties in the relevant discussions, I have rescheduled the informal discussions on FMCT to the third week of China's presidency. I would like to explain here that when making these arrangements, China has patiently and fully consulted relevant delegations and parties over a long period of time.

(continued in English)

We have been engaged in numerous bilateral consultations with delegations and with groups on how to schedule the prospective informal meetings on FMCT within the Conference. After consultations, China as the President designates a subsequent president has made enormous efforts by rescheduling back and forth several times to cater to the concerns of certain delegations. This is the result, the arrangement distributed as in document CD/WP.565 represents the result of our consultation with our colleagues.

(continued in Chinese)

We haven't made a decision on the coordinator for this agenda item. I am still consulting various parties at the moment; I will announce a bit later the name of the coordinator of FMCT along with the name of the coordinator for negative security assurances, at the same time. The above arrangement is, in my view, conducive to participation by all relevant parties and is in the interests of all.

These are my ideas and suggestions on how to conduct the work during China's presidency. If there are no objections I will proceed accordingly. What needs to be stressed here is that my arrangement with the indicative timetable contained in document CP/WP.565 is proposed without prejudice to rule 30 of the Rules of Procedure, which assures the right of any member State of the Conference to raise any subject relevant to the work of the conference at the plenary meeting and to have a full opportunity of presenting its views on any subject which it may consider to merit attention. Thank you all for your attention.

(continued in English)

I now wish to invite the views of members. I recognize the Ambassador of Italy; I will now give you the floor.

Mr. Manfredi (Italy): We received this document only last night, and we just gave it a quick reading, and we have a few concerns regarding the distribution of time and the emphasis given on certain items, and we would be very grateful if we could have some time to think about it. I think that if we approve it this morning, it is premature. So we would need more time to think on the various consequences that approving this as it is would have.

The President: Thank you. I recognize the Ambassador of Japan. I give you the floor.

Mr. Suda (Japan): Thank you very much Mr. President, Ambassador Wang Qun. First of all, I would like to congratulate you on the assumption of the very high office of the President of the Conference at this very important juncture. My delegation is committed to working closely with you and willing to extend our cooperation for your presidency.

Well, now talking on this Conference document WP.565. Well, I and Ambassador Wang are very close friends to each other; we have had lots of chances to talk about the good food and drinks and nice places to go in Geneva, but I don't remember that I was consulted on this particular matter beforehand with you. So I am not sure, as the Nigerian Ambassador indicated, I am not sure whether many of us were really consulted on this particular schedule for the Conference under your presidency. I see that the initial response to this proposal – I have various questions and comments on this proposal.

First of all, why should we discuss the all-important agendas in the form of informal meetings? Because I recall this was just exactly what we have done last year during the Belgian presidency, and this year, thanks to the leadership of the Canadian Ambassador and the Chilean Ambassador, we made progress to move from the informal meeting to formal plenary meeting on those important agendas. So I don't see any particular reason why we have to go back to the precedent we have already done last year and whether there would be much additional value to repeat that process of last year.

Secondly, I was a bit surprised to see all those meetings in the morning and afternoon and all through the weeks. It is quite unusual from my limited experience of the Conference, and I understand that for many delegates – I recall some delegates requested some time before that there shouldn't be too many meetings in the week. Certainly, my delegation is ready to attend as many meetings as possible because they are very useful ones, but I think that may possibly cause some inconvenience to some delegates to attend all these many meetings in the coming four weeks. So, as the Italian Ambassador suggested, we also definitely need more time to consider this proposal.

The President: Thank you for your intervention. Any other views? The Ambassador of Germany, you have the floor.

Mr. Hoffmann (Germany): Mr. President, can I, at the outset, welcome you in the President's chair and wish you every success and assure you of our full cooperation?

I have listened with great interest to your introductory remarks about the document which, to some surprise, I have to say, I found on my table today. In fact, we received, if you will, an advance copy of this indicative timetable from the secretariat yesterday at 6 o'clock and 35 minutes according to my fax machine, and therefore I am slightly surprised that it is already on the table today. In fact, we would have preferred to have a bit more time to consult it informally and, in the vein of Ambassador Suda, I would like to say I would be very happy to invite the President for a cup of coffee and to consult also with us, and would certainly be very interested to discuss the matter. In fact, we do need a bit more time to consult with our own authorities about how to approach this.

Let me also add a few remarks in terms of the substance of the matter. It is no question that we will have to deal with the issue of the programme of work under any presidency, and we very much hope that this is always a matter which presidencies pursue, and it is, of course, also only natural that we deal with the items of the agenda of the Conference; that is our task. But, the question, of course, is how we do this in practical terms, in terms of allotting time on timetables. And I think this is a matter which, of course, has to be assessed in the light of previous efforts; mention has been made of what happened in the last eight weeks of the 2011 session under the presidencies of your two predecessors. In fact, we have gone through the core agenda items, actually twice at least, maybe three times you could say, however you count it, already this year, and we have had informal discussions of that nature under the Belgian presidency last year. So in order to come to an assessment on how we want to allot time to doing our business, I think we need to reflect on that a little bit more, and therefore I would support what has been said by colleagues from Italy and Japan that we need a bit more time to look into this matter.

The President: At this stage, is there any other delegation wishing to take the floor? Since I see none, then I would like, by way of responding to the observations made by three colleagues of ours, I would like to offer some preliminary observations of mine, in my capacity as the President. But before I do this, let me seek clarifications from the distinguished Ambassador of Italy and the distinguished Ambassador of Germany. So you are saying that, in terms of procedures, you would like to seek more time to consider this. How much time would you need? The distinguished Ambassador of Italy.

Mr. Manfredi (Italy): Thank you, Mr. President. First of all, I was remiss before: I should have started by congratulating you on assuming the Chair of the Conference and, of course, we will do our very best to help you.

I don't know how much time we need specifically, but you said last Thursday something to the effect that "More haste less speed", or something to that effect. So, obviously we don't want an eternity, but we would like a few days to consult with Rome and consult with our partners in the Western group, and also we would be very grateful if we could have consultations because we weren't consulted yet.

The President: The distinguished Ambassador of Germany.

Mr. Hoffman (Germany): Thank you very much for inviting me to speak.

The President: I don't invite you to speak – I invite you to clarify on the time you need.

Mr. Hoffman (Germany): Yes, of course, I am trying to do that, Mr. President, we certainly want to oblige you, but I would echo what has been said by my Italian colleague, and also it is not only a matter of consulting with our own capital, it is also a matter of consulting with colleagues here in regional groups, and I would assume that through chairpersons of regional groups, you would also be informed about how delegations feel

about this particular proposal. I want to repeat again: the issue is not that we deal with the programme of work and the core items, the issue is how much time we allot to what and with what kind of intensity, in the light of the fact that we have gone through a number of rounds of this already this year. This is, in my assessment, the only question which needs to be decided.

The President: Thank you for your clarification. I would say that you focus on what you, in your national capacity, think, and also I think in your statement you virtually cover possible points in the context of regional groups, but that's exactly the purpose that in this open and transparent manner I invite views. That's why I circulated a paper, a paper as contained in document CD/WP.565, and I think these are actually the papers with ideas based on nothing novel at all, and I think it's not only based on the established practice, including the practice by the Belgian presidency last year. And also I think, in terms of substance, it's exactly based on a consensual approach and even, with the exception of a change of names and dates, not even another word of substance is changed. The very purpose on the line is to avoid confusion, and I think this is just merely a piece of paper on a timetable so as to enable us to work forward. So, United Kingdom on a point of order, or what? Yes, you are welcome, I give you the floor.

Mr. Duncan (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): Mr. President, since this is the first time I take the floor for some time, let me congratulate you on your appointment and assure you of the support of the United Kingdom delegation.

I didn't mean to interrupt your flow, but to come in with some comments, having heard what others have said. I have probably been in this organization far too long, because it does strike me that occasionally we seem to lose track of what's going on in the outside world beyond these splendidly painted walls. And there are two which perhaps we might wish to bear in mind, and I think it might help in the debate.

First of all, as we know, we have not been able to get consensus here. We've actually had consensus, but not unanimity, and, of course, every nation needs to be sure that they understand what is going on, and I understand that some nations here clearly want a little bit more time, and that's quite a reasonable approach. From our perspective, we welcome your proposal. It's a useful proposal. As others have said, it's something that we have done before, and I think therein lies something that we should consider — it was raised by, I believe, the esteemed Senegalese colleague — that the outside world is not satisfied with the work of this organization, and by the outside world, I mean our organization, the General Assembly, and it has told us in very clear terms that it wishes us to begin work. We have not managed to do that. We are trying to do that in various ways. Some nations have gone outside, as we are all aware, to look at how we might produce the granularity or the detail of the FMCT.

Why would we want the FMCT? Well, as you said before, but perhaps it's worth reminding ourselves, it is an intrinsic part of getting on to the road free of nuclear weapons. If you wish to get on to that road, you need to do at least three things. Firstly, you need a commitment to disarm; some of us have done that. You need an agreement to stop testing; that is in train. And you need to stop production of the raw material for nuclear weapons. Unless you do those three things, you cannot be considered to have got on to the road. And we are at that particular juncture, trying to deal with that particular issue. I have to say in passing that it's slightly disappointing to see that some of those most vociferous members of this body who support us in wanting disarmament have not joined some of this informal activity outside to look at some of the detail of what an FMCT would take, how it would work. This is not an outside negotiation; we all know it's going on, so let's be adult about it and welcome those who wish to get involved in that process.

Now, of course, it's important to ensure that we do everything that we can to take forward the work of the Conference and, as I say, I very much welcome what you have put forward as a proposal today, and – will that work? We don't know. And it is important to keep in mind the real-world question is the future of this organization. Will the work we do outside in the side events, inside under your proposal, lead to something meaningful? – because that's the litmus test. The litmus test is: will the General Assembly consider that meaningful work has been done? And I think far too often, we get into the minutiae of rules and regulations, what we've done before, and that doesn't actually answer the exam question we have been posed. So I am rather, in terms of sympathy, with the three members of the organization who've asked for a little bit more time to understand in what way will this contribute to what we all want, which is the meaningful work starting in the Conference. So I am rather with them in terms of understanding: what's the outcome?

You have consulted with us, but I understand that you haven't managed to consult with other key members, and perhaps we do need a little bit more time. That's not to say that those processes I mentioned, the side events and your own proposal, are incompatible; they can perfectly well run in parallel. I think we have the capacity to do that.

The President: Thank you, Ambassador Duncan, for your intervention. While I think we are on the item of housekeeping business, especially in relation to the proposal I put to members as contained in document CD/WP.565, I nevertheless take note of the observations you have just made which are general in nature. And, secondly, I would like to thank you for the welcome you expressed from your national perspective on my proposal. Thirdly, with regard to the open and transparent consultations with the key delegations, I would stress that I, for my part, and also in my capacity as the incoming President or in my capacity as the President, I have conducted almost 40 bilateral consultations with delegations and with groups. Though, of course, I would have liked to have conducted more, but given that the President is also a human being, and given that, virtually, even if I have the will, physically I need to be able to do it. But nevertheless, not only through the almost 40 bilateral consultations, but also open-endedly and transparently I have consulted you through regional coordinators and the P6, and I think the mechanism of regional coordinator is exactly to pass back the thinking of the President and also from what has transpired from the Presidential consultations.

So, in my capacity as the President, though I try to refrain from saying things substantive in nature, on the points you addressed as to exactly whether the consultation is open and transparent or not, I as the President will remain open, will remain as facilitative as possible and as accommodative as possible and open to members' guidance and open to members' decisions. So that's why a paper is circulated through the secretariat. Yesterday morning I asked the secretariat to circulate this paper so that delegations could be presented with no surprise, not only based on what has been already discussed thoroughly through the nearly 40 bilateral consultations, but also I think the caveat that such proposals are based on no novelties whatsoever, and it is just merely timetables on the core issues we have been discussing. And so Mexico – a point of order or what?

Mr. Hernández Basave (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, we were not raising a point of order, just our name card to indicate that we were interested in making a comment, because, although we are not negotiating, it sometimes is difficult for diplomats to keep silent.

Mr. President, this is how we see the situation. Firstly, I would like to point out that I have already indicated the flexibility of the Group of 21, currently coordinated by Mexico, which met in a hurried fashion this morning after learning of your proposal. Not all members could be present, but a good number of them were and those who were present agreed to indicate our flexibility with regard to your preferred timetable although there is a

general feeling in the Group that we would like to keep Wednesdays beginning this Wednesday free for regional meetings. That is the preference of the Group of 21.

Now from the national standpoint, on behalf of the delegation of Mexico, I would like to say that we by far prefer to meet in plenary session. Although we are not negotiating, our deliberations help us to reach a closer understanding; however, above all, they enable public opinion, through the NGOs, observer States and so on, to follow our debates and understand the trends in this body. Therefore Mexico has a strong preference for continuing our deliberations in plenary session.

Mr. President, reading over the very rich statement you made at the last session presided over by Chile, I see that you mentioned an ancient Chinese proverb: "More haste, less speed". Perhaps we should now follow this ancient Chinese proverb and make it possible for delegations which require more time for national, regional or interregional consultations to reach agreement and come back to your proposal later. We are aware, as the distinguished Ambassador of the United Kingdom just pointed out, that there are other events being held in parallel with our sessions and these are matters that need to be taken into account.

The Conference on Disarmament cannot do something that might stand in the way of other genuine efforts to reconcile positions on important agenda items. Thus our advice now is "More haste, less speed". Let us be guided by this principle and give some time for consultations by delegations and perhaps by tomorrow they will be able to give us an answer.

The President: Thank you, Ambassador from Mexico, for your inputs, basically general in nature. Briefly, I think when you and other colleagues quote the saying I said — "More haste less speed" — well, it is true. But you should also remember that in association I said what Chairman Mao said: "Seize every hour, seize every day". And thank you very much for the flexibility on the part of Mexico and grateful to you for what you have indicated. So thank you very much for the flexibility. And with regard to the regional coordinators, I think I would leave discretion to the regional groups to decide when and where and in what manner they would like to have their regional coordinators. So, on the record, this is it. So, having come back to my proposals, any other delegations would like to take the floor based on the three colleagues who just expressed their views? If I see none, then I will continue my response to the three delegates, that is, Japan, Germany and Italy.

So, as I understand that Italy just procedurally needs some time without knowing how long, and based on this and based also on the understanding that Germany similarly, though with some misgivings on how the meetings are specifically scheduled, but these I believe are not that much of a difference. But what I'm particularly concerned with, in fact, the inputs I attach great importance to, is that from what Ambassador Akio just said, that he not only needs time, but also I think he virtually has difficulties, expressed doubts and seeks to dispute the format of the meetings I tried to schedule, that is, informal meetings, though I think I have already made abundantly clear in my numerous bilateral consultations, and also based on the established practice and the consensual approach that is non-controversial, but since I think the distinguished Ambassador of Japan has difficulties to see the format of informal meetings, arrangements I envisaged in my proposal as I put to you, as contained in document CD/WP.565, I think that it's my impression, my understanding, clearly on the basis of such inputs from Japan, that there is no consensus in this chamber at this stage on the proposal I put to you, as contained in document CD/WP.565. So, given that, I will not proceed on this basis.

Since we have to start the work without wasting time, and given that the proposal I tried, which I believe is good for all delegations, especially to enable participation by all countries in the relevant processes made on FMCT or other core issues, but nevertheless

that I, as President, will always remain as open, facilitative and accommodative as possible, I will stand ready to be guided by the members, especially their decisions, especially their thinking. So, having said that, I alternatively will propose another formula.

So, who is going to take the floor? Portugal please.

Mr. Miranda Duarte (Portugal): Thank you President, although it is not a point of order, just a general remark, I could wait for you to complete your observations or go straight away. My intention was not actually to comment on your proposal, on the CD/WP.565, but rather to welcome your initial remarks.

The President: Yes I may say that that's the ground that we've already traversed. So we've already put CD/WP.565 behind us. Any other comments?

Mr. Miranda Duarte (Portugal): Yes, that is fine with me, because I was not going to comment on that document, I was going to comment on your initial remarks.

The President: You are welcome and I think I asked for comments of general nature in all relevant contexts, but I would still like to give you the floor if you want it because we are virtually moving on to the following business. I need to finish the housekeeping business. Please.

Mr. Miranda Duarte (Portugal): Thank you Mr. President, again. I would just like to welcome your remarks in your statement at the beginning of the meeting, where you said that you will try your utmost to find time to discuss and to allocate some time for an exchange on the question of the enlargement. I think that is rather important, so my thanks to you from the Portuguese delegation; we welcome it very much and are looking forward to having that discussion.

The President: Thank you very much, our distinguished colleague from Portugal. I think your comment is most helpful and constructive, though I would like to have it in the context of a general statement, but I think it is never too late and also, in fact, in my statement, I shared with you that I attach great importance to the interactions between members and observing States or non-members, and also personally I want, in my capacity as President, to schedule meetings or dialogues with non-members or observers on the question of the enlargement of the membership. And also I think in the format of the plenary, even I think in the context of the aborted formula with informals, the plenary is reserved for delegations to request the floor and discuss the question of enlargement. So, thank you, colleague from Portugal.

And, having said that, I will continue to move the proceedings, and I recognize the distinguished Ambassador of Turkey.

Mr. Demiralp (Turkey): Mr. President, since I am taking the floor for the first time in the last two months, let me first of all congratulate your predecessor for the cool manner he conducted the negotiations in this house and did not rock the boat. He was very successful, and the non-paper he left with us is a good legacy on which we will build, I believe, later on.

And let me also congratulate you for the assumption of your presidency. I am sure it will be a very successful presidency with your energetic style and diplomatic skills. I would like to make only one point: just consult with everybody. I was not consulted at all. So, that is a house which works on the basis of consensus. We want to be consulted on all matters. Without any consultation we cannot join a consensus on any issue.

The President: Japan please.

Mr. Suda (Japan): Thank you Mr. President. Well, since you kind of interpreted, made an interpretation, of what I said about this proposal CD/WP.565, I would like to state

the position clearly on this proposal. What I said about the question of the informal meetings, whether informal meeting is appropriate or productive or not, I just asked questions today. We had already informal meetings last year and we had a plenary meeting on all these four agenda items this year; whether it is better to have informal meetings, going back to the form we did have last year, or better to have the similar kind of discussions in the formal way, just like the Canadian and Chilean Ambassadors took initiative in conducting that kind of discussion. That was one thing. Certainly I expressed a doubt, but I would rather like to ask all of us whether you think that it is better to choose informal meetings or a formal meeting discussion in plenary.

The second point I made is that because this is unusually very many meetings all coming in four weeks, whether that will not cause some inconvenience for some of our delegations. So, taking into account these true concerns — and I echo what the Italian Ambassador and the German Ambassador said — we need more time to consider these concerns and we need to have more consultations with the President as well since, as I said, I don't remember I had any chance to have a consultation with you on this proposal.

The President: Thank you. I think two points. Firstly, I think the bilateral consultation with delegations – China, though I think it wanted to do it, but physically and virtually, it would not be possible to consult each and every delegation, especially concerning something which is based on established practice and also the consensual approach by the Conference. I apologize if we have not had the chance to consult with the relevant delegations, but that is in fact what we would like to do. But, on the contrary, what I think I would like to draw your attention to is the open-ended processes I think I put forward to your proposal one day before we came to this session, and also I asked the regional coordinators to consult you, and that's the way we are working in an open and transparent manner. So, I'm not going to repeat it again since given the nature of this plenary, it's all on the record.

Secondly, I think with the second point raised by the Japanese Ambassador, I would simply say that, especially in my capacity as the President, I need to ensure the normal functions of the President, and the point you just raised I think goes back to the ground we've already traversed. Since there is no consensus in this room on my proposal as contained in document CD/WP.565, I have asked the secretariat to provide you with an alternative formula for your consideration. Let me explain that it just contains indicative timetables, and in fact the arrangement is about the plenary, and I think at this stage, and under current circumstances, I am envisaging to follow the established and consensual approach by my predecessors, the distinguished Ambassadors from Canada and Chile, that is, to conduct our discussions on core issues in the format of the plenary. The working paper has just been distributed, and as you may see, the thrust of this paper is based exactly on the practice of the Canadian and Chilean presidencies. So I hope that this will be agreeable to you. I will suspend the meeting for five minutes before we come back on this second option.

I suspend the meeting for five minutes.

The meeting was suspended at 11.45 a.m. and resumed at 12.05 p.m.

The President: Colleagues and friends, I will resume this meeting. Now you have before you an indicative timetable as contained in document CD/WP.566. It is clearly merely an indicative timetable and, for your information, this is actually how I envisage to conduct my work, and if it's agreeable then I will proceed on this basis. I recognize the Ambassador of Germany.

Mr. Hoffmann (Germany): I can only speak for myself and I will make a practical procedural recommendation, proposal rather. Let me say again: it is clear that the Conference has to deal with the issue of the programme of work and the items on its

agenda, but I think it is nowhere written that each and every presidency within four weeks has to go through all these items to start with. And that is why I have felt for a long time, in fact, that I would personally much prefer if presidencies could coordinate among themselves — the famous P6 — how they distribute these tasks over a whole session and come up with a timetable which would allocate these items to certain dates in the session. And, of course, there would be a proviso saying that in case of need we can always adapt the timetable to new needs which may have come up. In this context I would recall that it seems to be an established tradition and practice that we have two plenaries per week, namely on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 10 a.m. Now, if I remember correctly, the Canadian and Chilean presidencies approached this matter not in the form of a formal proposal and a formal document, but in the form of a gentleman's agreement, that is to say they consulted with colleagues and through regional groups and coordinators their ideas about how to allocate time to certain themes and issues on our agenda.

Now on your new revised proposal, first of all, my compliments that you were so quick in actually preparing a fallback position already when you came into the chamber, it seems. This, of course, shows a lot of foresight. But I would suggest now — that would be my proposal — that you invite us to look at this issue in two days' time, that is to say, this Thursday morning. We all look at this paper, I regard this as an invitation for a gentleman's agreement, rather that we should allocate time in a certain way and that we try to get this out of the way Thursday morning, and that you also invite us now to make statements on agenda items 1 and 2 on Thursday, because that is obviously your intention, and I have no problem with that at all, and I think everybody would find time to consult his or her capital and would find time to consult colleagues, and we would not have lost any time. I think this is really the time one should have to look at such an issue because, as I said, the whole thing came to us via the secretariat last night at, I think, 6.32 or so.

The President: Any other delegation want to take the floor? And, since I see none, I would first come up with my observations in my capacity as the President and secondly I will come up with a procedure proposal on how to deal with the papers before us.

Firstly, I think there is nothing new in this paper just circulated, as you may see, and totally based on the established practices of my predecessors, I envisage to organize meetings in the format of plenary, not only, I think, on issues like a programme of work, but also on core issues as well as agenda items 5, 6, 7. So, I would be totally ready to be guided by member States, but nevertheless I didn't think I would be surprised that even this procedure thing as an alternative based on purely established practice and consensual practice will prove that difficult for any delegations, who say that they must consult with capitals or whatever. If there is anything of substance, if there is whatever, I think it would be understandable moreover that this is something. Yesterday, I already asked regional coordinators to explain that this is the second option, this is the fallback position, in case the first option is not going to fly. So, having been through these open and transparent processes, I am still, I think, open for whatever criticism you may have that I try to catch up and improve what I can do as a human being, so this is the first point I would like to make in the nature of my observations.

Secondly, in relation to the remark just made concerning the format of this paper vis-à-vis a so-called gentleman's agreement, I would say that this is for the information of members, and I also have done in exactly the same manner as the distinguished Ambassador Pedro Oyarce, as reflected in his document CD/WP.564, and so this is exactly, and I simply do not quite understand what are the misgivings, and I think the paper there during the Chilean presidency is there, and I invite the distinguished Ambassador from Germany to have a close look at it.

And, secondly, I would like to propose, in terms of procedure, that in order for all delegations to fully consult with their capitals, though I think already, through the regional

coordinators, I've explained the rationale of this formula with formal plenary meetings as well as the specific arrangement of this formula through the regional coordinators to all members, and I even asked the coordinators – I provided the regional coordinators with a copy of this second option and asked them to explain in detail that in case the first option is not flying then this is to come. So that's the reason why I put to you, if you think you need to consider, I assume that you want a decision on this, though I personally think it is just information for the delegations, and I would like to proceed on this basis. And another additional comment and observation I wish to make is that, as I shared with you in my opening statement, I committed to my consultations with all key players and with regional countries, including with other P6 countries and regional coordinators. I have been doing, not only I think through yesterday's Presidential consultations, I have been convening the P6 consultations in the nature of a working lunch and also keeping in close touch with the secretariat and also numerous bilateral consultations. But having said that, I am always, as I repeatedly said, as President, I stand ready to be as facilitative and accommodative as possible, and given the sentiments you just made, I would say that if I think you would like to give a formal consent to this document by Thursday at the plenary, I have no problem whatsoever, but I need to be guided, if that is the thinking on the part of the members in this chamber, because I think that this, for my part, at least from my perspective, I think will be purely for your information. Of course, if you think to dispute whatever the arrangement, and I am always willing to listen to whatever the reviews, because it's just meeting schedules. And that's it. So, how would you like me to proceed? To proceed as this, or I think you need to take back and come back for a formal decision on this on Thursday.

The floor is open. I would like to have the views from members. If there are no further views on this, I thank you for your understanding on this, then I will proceed as this as this is the information I shared with you, and I will proceed accordingly.

Having said that, I now move on to the third item of today's plenary agenda after the housekeeping business. I will devote the remaining time of this plenary to an exchange on the programme of work.

(continued in Chinese)

According to rule 28 of the Rules of Procedure of the CD, the Conference must achieve a programme of work before starting new proceedings. A programme of work, namely CD/1864, was achieved in 2009; however, it is necessary for us to continue our effort in order to get started on substantive work. My predecessor, the distinguished Ambassador of Chile, made unremitting efforts in order to achieve a programme of work, and this has laid down a good foundation for continuation of relevant discussions.

My feeling is many member States are asking for the conclusion of a comprehensive and balanced programme of work with specific mandates. At the same time various parties have also put forward some new thinking, some new proposals. Some members suggest achieving a simplified programme of work, while some others suggest a programme of work without mandates. These are useful lines of thinking for us to explore a possible programme of work.

During our Presidency of the Conference, I envisage three plenary meetings focused on the programme of work. In the first of these plenaries, we will focus on the so-called non-starters, which are the elements which are utterly impossible. For the second of such plenaries, I would like everyone to focus on one issue that is indispensable in a possible programme of work. In the third plenary I will try my best to sum up the status and the positions of various parties. In order to make today's discussion more effective, I would like us to focus on which are the elements that are utterly impossible. Of course, you are all welcome to put forward your own ideas concerning the programme of the work. If we are able to get a clear idea of these questions, I believe it will help us to sidestep the so-called

minefields and to achieve a programme of work. Now the floor is open for the delegations to make comments on this issue. Thank you.

(continued in English)

Ambassador Hannan of Bangladesh.

Mr. Hannan (Bangladesh): Mr. President, it is indeed a pleasure to see you at the helm of the Conference on Disarmament. Congratulations. You have literally hit the ground running; this augurs well for the work of the Conference. We believe that under your able stewardship, the Conference will be able to move towards setting the stage for initiating substantive work as part of its mandate.

I would like to briefly respond to your query for this plenary as to any non-starter in the programme of work. This is indeed a provocative yet stimulating question. As far as the Bangladesh delegation is concerned, we underscore the need for a comprehensive and balanced programme of work in keeping with the mandate of the Conference. Accordingly, my delegation had supported the programme of work contained in document CD/1864. However, we understand that in order for the programme of work to produce tangible and effective results, it must be based on consensus and enjoy the confidence of all delegations, hence our support for a possible flexible and pragmatic approach to circumvent the current stalemate. We recognize the mutually reinforcing nature of all four core issues of the proposed programme of work.

As previously stated, our delegation attaches high priority to negative security assurances. We believe that we have had constructive informal discussion on this crucial matter. We underscore the need for building on our informal discussions and remain committed to an early negotiation of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument for NSAs under the aegis of the Conference. We strongly believe that the Conference is the most appropriate forum for such negotiations, since it has all nuclear-weapon States as members.

In a similar vein, we would like to see substantive progress being made in other core issues of the Conference's mandate. The Conference must remain the vehicle for negotiation on all those issues, leveraging on its status as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiation forum. My delegation sees merit in continuing with discussions in both formal and informal settings. However, we reiterate the need for moving towards substantive and systematic work with a view to translating our discussions, where appropriate and feasible, into negotiations on legally binding instruments in a non-discriminatory and non-prejudicial manner. This is the beacon of light that we would like to see at the end of the tunnel. We would not be seen as repeatedly undertaking the work of Sisyphus in the Conference. That remains a clear non-starter for us.

Finally, Mr. President, we have taken note with interest of the indicative timetable for the work of the Conference that you have presented to members. We understand that discussions on the agenda items will continue in parallel with the ongoing discussions on the adoption of a programme of work for the Conference. Subject to the adoption of this proposal by the Conference, my delegation stands ready to deliver on any work entrusted to us to take this work forward.

The President: Thank you for your substantive inputs, Ambassador Hannan. I recognize Ambassador Duncan of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Duncan (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): Thank you, Mr. President, for your latest thoughts on taking forward this very important work. I am not sure I have really understood entirely this suggestion that we should look in the programme of work at non-starters and must-haves. As our Bangladeshi colleague has said, that is a provocative and stimulating statement, but it is also something that contains a degree of

risk, indeed high risk, in multilateral diplomacy, unless we understand what it is that we are engaged upon, and perhaps in your consultations with us in the next few days, you could explain a little bit more what you have in mind in that. If we have an examination of non-starters and must-haves, as a compendium of national positions, I doubt that will take us very far at all, and I am sure that is not what you have in mind.

Of course, going back to what I was saying earlier this morning, the basic task before us is to turn into a reality the shared objective of us all in order to get to a world free of nuclear weapons, and as a group, the Conference group of ambassadors, to respond to what our most important body in multilateral affairs, the General Assembly, has asked us to do, and that is to start negotiations on an FMCT. So I think we need to be very clear as to what is the context within which we are operating and not get into a sort of listing of all the problems that we have, which of course I am sure you are not intending to do. But I think a little bit more clarity about how that might work, your non-starters and must-haves, I think would help us – not necessarily today; I mean, by all means, that can be done in consultation.

The President: Normally, I think I, as the President, will come up with the observations of a substantive nature, especially in responding to the comments of member States, unless I think it's related to my proposal which require my explanations. So let me say that I really take note of the points made by the Ambassador of the United Kingdom, and in relation to my proposals to focus our discussions on the non-starters, it is just merely a proposal from the President, and without prejudice to my earlier remarks on the record that you have seen, I said, without prejudice to whatever inputs member States may have on the question of the programme of work.

As the President, I am a neutral man, I am not pushing anything, I think, in the nature of a list of non-starters or whatever, I just want to benefit from the inputs of all countries, all members, so as to enable me, if not all the members in this Council chamber, to have a clearer understanding of what is the position of our member States. So, do feel free to have your inputs and sentiments on the question of the programme of work. I, as the President, will be open to all these views, but your inputs will prove to be beneficial to all member States.

The distinguished Ambassador of France.

Mr. Danon (France) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, on the issue of the programme of work, I would like to make two or three points. The first one, as mentioned by Ambassador Duncan of the United Kingdom, is that it is very important to be able to show, to the First Committee and then at the General Assembly in October that the Conference on Disarmament has been working this year and has been able to make headway on matters of substance. In order for this to happen, the Conference must be able to produce a report on its own work. And for it to be able to produce a report on its own work, it has to have a programme of work. Because the difficulty is that even if the Conference works in plenary sessions, side events and informal sessions, if there is no programme of work, the final report will be a procedural report that will leave a strange impression in the archives that the Conference is at a deadlock whereas it might actually have been working.

As far as I am concerned, aside from our customary debates, the programme of work is a sort of key to enable us to report on our discussions to the General Assembly. In this connection, our preference is well known: our preference is for document CD/1864, but we know that document CD/1864 is in a deadlock situation and that it will be difficult to pick up where we left off. My personal impression is that we will not have a programme of work this year with a negotiating mandate for a legally binding text on the four core issues. Why?

Because there is no consensus. There are always one or more countries that have problems with starting negotiations on one of the four core issues.

The question that arises therefore is whether it is possible for us to have a programme of work that does not actually contain a negotiating mandate. One might say that this contradicts the very spirit of the Conference on Disarmament which is a negotiating body. However, in reality we have had programmes of work in the past without any negotiating mandate including some programmes of work that were nothing more than a schedule of activities. That happened four years in a row.

Thus nothing prevents us, and here I am not calling into question the Conference on Disarmament, nothing prevents us from having a programme of work that is nothing more than the agenda, in the French sense of the term, in other words, the *schedule of activities*. Therefore, and because we consider that it is now essential for us to have a programme of work, I was going to say to save the Conference from itself, we are prepared to accept a programme of work that would comprise only the schedule of activities for the entire session.

We need to be clear on the following: it is easier to move in that direction, to go towards that result, rather than to try and come up with a text describing the four groups on the four core issues or the three additional items, because in that way, we would provide the groups with discussion mandates. I can understand that it might be difficult for some countries to accept this solution, and therefore think that it would be simpler to consider that the schedule of activities could serve as a programme of work.

In so doing we could firstly dispatch this recurrent problem, which is really of little consequence and is taking up an enormous amount of time, when we should be focusing our efforts on work of substance. Secondly, the fact that we formally have a programme of work, even though it is highly simplified, will make it possible for us to report on our work of substance. Thirdly, a programme of work, even if it is simplified, by no means calls the Conference on Disarmament into question as a negotiating body. We are therefore fully open to the idea of having a programme of work that is simplified and is merely the schedule of activities. Having said this, we will not lose sight of our priority, as stated by others, but also by General Assembly resolutions, by the NPT Review Conference, and so on. Our priority is to start negotiations, as soon as possible, on a fissile material cut-off treaty.

For this reason, any discussions that we may have in plenary, informal or formal meetings, or during side events, are all considered to be productive, in the sense that they gradually allow us to clear the way for the start-up of negotiation on more solid technical bases.

For similar reasons, I would like to recall that the Conference was able to work at a time when there was no programme of work, but with the Group of Scientific Experts. This Group of Scientific Experts was first set up in 1978, under the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament, and was reinstated from 1980 to 1982. It allows us to deal with all issues since it has a flexible mandate. The Group has never been disbanded; to all intents and purposes it still exists. All we need to do is to reactivate it. It has no specific mandate, we can give it the terms of reference we want, and even work on the four core issues simultaneously. In fact, it is similar to the Group of Governmental Experts, under the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, for those who follow the work under that instrument. In other words, it is technical and scientific in nature, but in fact, it does help to move negotiations towards the adoption of new texts, and again, all of this is possible without a programme of work.

I am recalling this to make the point that it is not as complicated as all that to work on matters of substance in the Conference on Disarmament, if that is what we want.

However, it is extremely important to be able to report to the General Assembly at the end of the year on this work of substance.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank the distinguished Ambassador of France.

(*continued in English*)

I now recognize the distinguished representative of Pakistan.

Mr. Khan (Pakistan): Mr. President, first of all I take this opportunity to congratulate you on the assumption of the presidency of the Conference. I assure you of my delegation's complete support in the discharge of your responsibilities.

With respect to the issue at hand, I would want to make a short statement. The Conference has a broad agenda which must be implemented in order to strengthen international peace and stability. Nuclear disarmament, negative security assurances and prevention of an arms race in outer space are the issues on which the Conference has worked in depth in the past and which are urgent and relevant today. These issues must be taken up for negotiating legally binding treaties as part of the Conference's programme of work for 2011. The issue of a fissile material cut-off treaty has been impacted by developments at the regional and the global levels that impinge on the security of Conference members. The future cut-off treaty has been rendered ineffective even before the start of first negotiations by the actions and policies of some States purely for their political and commercial interests and without any regard for their obligations and commitments to regional stability, nuclear disarmament or non-proliferation.

The President: Thank you for your statement, distinguished representative of Pakistan. I now recognize the distinguished representative of the United States.

Mr. Reid (United States of America): Mr. Chairman, as I take the floor for the first time during the term of your presidency, I congratulate you on the assumption of your presidency and we pledge the efforts of our delegation to try and work with you to advance the work of this body.

I must first echo some of the cautions of my United Kingdom colleague as we embark upon this *tour d'horizon*. I hope that as it goes on that we can find some common ground, but I have some doubts as to whether or not as the exercise goes on that that will necessarily be the outcome. For reporting purposes and for the efforts of the presidency to try and parse different delegations' views here, I would recall to colleagues the Secretary's very clear recent remarks on United States priorities in disarmament. I think those speak very clearly, and to boil it down to Geneva – speak, if you will, we look forward to the earliest possible commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. That's the remit we believe we have been given by the United Nations General Assembly, by the international community, it's the expectation that we believe the Secretary-General was speaking to when he came to talk to us very pointedly, not too long ago, and it is the yardstick by which we feel we are probably soon going to be judged. And, to make it even clearer, the active verb there is negotiate.

The President: Thank you for your statement, the distinguished representative of the United States, and I recognize the distinguished Ambassador of Chile, Ambassador Oyarce.

Mr. Oyarce (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, first of all, as outgoing President, I would like to thank you on behalf of my country and the P6, and also, personally, I would like to thank everyone for the support I received during our presidency. We would like to thank you for your initial comments and congratulate you on taking over the presidency. We will do our utmost to assist you.

Concerning the programme of work, I have just been reflecting at some length on the matter and think that it is a political matter, and should ideally, and I repeat the word, “ideally”, be aimed at facilitating substantive work. However, what the Ambassador of France said makes a lot of sense, namely that we must send to the General Assembly a message of productivity, and to do so, we clearly need to have a programme of work, not only for functional reasons, but also for the political survival of this forum. This is a test and it must be seen as such. The programme of work ideally, as mentioned by a colleague, (he is not here now, but it was the alternate representative of Bangladesh), should have three elements. Without any doubt, these are the ideal elements: a balanced programme which covers all issues and also reflects the messages of the international community, which are clear in this respect, and also the rules of procedure aspect. However, you suggested that we should comment, share ideas on what issues should be considered.

First of all, we have to strike a balance between interests and priorities. This is clear. Will we have to do a new test to see what the interests and priorities are? I am not sure; some priorities have already been established.

Secondly, are there any issues ready for the negotiation of a binding agreement? Some delegations have said yes; others are only prepared for focused debates. This was reflected in the decision contained in document CD/1864. How can we move away from that “lack of political commitment”? Well, I have my doubts.

Now a third element, which is also important to take into account, is to see what the General Assembly is asking us to do in terms of defining the priorities of the international community in order to move closer, as the Ambassador of the United Kingdom said, to the real world. This is essential.

Fourthly, how can we involve experts in the work of the Conference on Disarmament? This is another matter we need to reflect upon. In the final analysis, I think we need to look at the possibility of reverting to a programme of work, which, as the ambassador of France said, might well be simplified, with all the risks that brings, but which is in line with the basic mandate of the Conference. It could be an alternative.

From my modest experience, I can say that a programme of work along the lines of document CD/1864, which I and many other delegations described as “the gold standard”, poses problems if we follow its wording, which is political commitment. A simplified programme also poses problems for those who want specific mandates. I consider the possibility of working without a programme of work as something purely theoretical rather than practical. We therefore have to seek an alternative which is as simple as possible to try to take account of the views of the international community on negotiations and also the concerns expressed by other States regarding the balance among or equal footing of different agenda topics. This is no easy matter.

Mr. President, we will support you in all your consultations. I can only hope that you will be more successful than with just constructive ambiguity.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): Thank you Ambassador of Chile. Just now in his statement, the distinguished Ambassador of Chile, on some important issues, no matter procedural or substantive, made some useful suggestions regarding the programme of work. These ideas merit careful consideration by all delegations, at least my delegation. Thank you distinguished Ambassador of Chile.

(*continued in English*)

I recognize the Ambassador of Mexico, please.

Mr. Hernández Basave (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, very briefly, we feel compelled to express, once again, our disappointment at the scant and even non-

existent possibilities of adopting a programme of work. We would also like to reiterate that the very essence of this Conference is to negotiate. The negotiating mandate has been an inherent part of this body since its inception. Mexico has promoted the various programmes of work that have been put forward. We could go along with a simplified programme of work, as mentioned earlier. In past years we have had simplified programmes of work consisting simply of a schedule of activities, and that worked well.

We regret that we are, yet again, bogged down in negotiating over mandates, when the mandate of the Conference is very clear – to negotiate. We also regret that in September we will be going to the First Committee and then to the plenary of the General Assembly, once again, without any results, at a time when, as you said in your introductory statement this morning and also in your latest statement, the international setting is eminently favourable in terms of disarmament and arms control. It is regrettable that we cannot do our work.

We would also like to recall that Mexico is of course in favour of negotiations on a comprehensive fissile material cut-off treaty which includes stockpiles; however, we also have indications and very clear mandates from various bodies, including the NPT Review Conference, which calls upon a subsidiary body in this Conference to look at nuclear disarmament issues that should be given particular attention and a swift response by the international community. We regret, therefore, that we cannot live up to our mandate. Our mandate is crystal clear and we continue to fail in negotiating mandates that already exist.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank the Ambassador of Mexico.

(*continued in English*)

At this stage, I would like to ask whether there is any other delegation who wishes to take the floor. I see none, and this concludes our business for today. The next plenary on the programme of work will be in the second week of China's presidency, that is, Wednesday, 30 March, and with the caveat that the President's proposals, either in the nature of non-starters or elements indispensable, is just purely for the reference of member States only. And what I envisage is to have the inputs from member States, not only benefiting myself, but also presumably to benefit all other member States in this open-ended setting. And so the next plenary of the Conference will be held on Thursday, at 10 a.m.

This meeting stands adjourned.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.