
Conference on Disarmament

1 September 2011

English

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

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Thursday, 1 September 2011, at 10.10 a.m.

President: Mr. Rodolfo Reyes Rodriguez (Cuba)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I declare open the 1235th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. Before we begin, allow me to welcome the Secretary-General of the Conference and the other members of the secretariat, and to thank them in particular for the great efforts they have made to ensure that the work of the Conference is fully multilingual. I had told them that, precisely because of Cuba's commitment in this regard, I intended to carry out my duties as President in Spanish, which is one of the official languages of the United Nations, and they have been very kind in preparing the documents needed to conduct the meeting in Spanish.

Before giving the floor to the speakers, I intended to go straight into the negotiation of the document, but let us welcome the delegations that are on the list of speakers for the first part of the debate.

First of all, personally and on behalf of the whole Conference, I would like to take this special opportunity to bid farewell to and thank Ambassador Rao of India. I would like to express to the Ambassador our deep appreciation for his many important contributions to our work during his time here with us and our sincere wish that he may find success and satisfaction in his new assignment.

At the same time, I would like to welcome, personally and on behalf of the Conference, Ambassador Minty, the new Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations Office at Geneva, including the Conference on Disarmament.

Before beginning our consideration of the report, we will turn to the list of speakers for this meeting.

Ms. Kennedy (United States of America): If I may, I want to bid farewell, in the warmest possible terms, and pay tribute to our colleague from India, Ambassador Rao, and wish him all the very best, and also to very briefly welcome our new colleague, Ambassador Minty, who I think is already known to many of us. I look forward very much to working with him.

If I may, I want to share with you a statement on behalf of my colleagues from China, Russia, the United Kingdom and France. I want to briefly recall that our colleague Ambassador Danon briefed this group earlier about a conference of these five States, the permanent members of the Security Council, held in Paris, a goal that had been enshrined in the NPT Review Conference Final Document.

Now, among the developments, there was a commitment by these five States to renew efforts on behalf of a fissile material cut-off treaty. So, following up on that commitment, I am happy to report that the five of us met here in Geneva on 30 August.

All five of our delegations were reinforced by our betters from capital. It was a good, productive meeting. So, without further ado, let me share with you a brief agreed summary of that meeting. I have got copies of it, so don't take notes if you don't wish to. I will read the statement:

Following up on their commitment made during the July Paris Conference, the P5 met in Geneva on 30 August to take stock of developments regarding the Conference on Disarmament (CD). They discussed how to achieve at the earliest possible date in the CD their shared goal of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons purposes. They expressed their determination to this end. In that context, they look forward to meeting again, with other relevant parties, during the United Nations General Assembly First Committee.

Mr. Rao (India): Mr. President, allow me to congratulate you on assuming the responsibility of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. It is a great pleasure to see a representative of Cuba chairing our proceedings.

Allow me also to welcome Ambassador Minty of South Africa to our midst. I have had the privilege of knowing him for several years. I am confident that his vast experience and widely acknowledged political sagacity will be valuable to our work.

Mr. President, as I prepare to leave Geneva for my next assignment, I ask your indulgence to share some personal reflections. I want to begin, however, by thanking all colleagues present here for their friendship, good cheer and sage counsel. I have been privileged to work amid such outstanding diplomats, and I will cherish the time we have spent together.

Multilateral work in disarmament has always been something of an elite occupation. I have never liked the idea of disarmament aristocracy, but I do believe that States need to cultivate disarmament expertise not only to be able to defend their own interests but also to be able to contribute to the larger cause of international peace and security. Aside from expertise, we also need forums where we can pursue collective action through dialogue and cooperation. As such, this house has been built over time, with patience and foresight. It embodies the idea that disarmament work is important enough to merit a standing negotiating forum. It represents the aspiration that disarmament treaties should have the legitimacy and force that collective action provides. What we forge here on the basis of agreed priorities and programmes, through dialogue and negotiation based on mutual respect, are treaties – treaties that can stand the test of time, that can be universally accepted.

The downside of such lofty ambition is frustration – frustration that universally acceptable treaties take a long time to forge, frustration that one's own priorities are not shared by others, frustration that political will to negotiate seems to flounder for long periods of time.

I too must admit to a degree of frustration – first, on account of the fact that, despite fundamental changes in the international security environment and some welcome changes in the political positions of States possessing nuclear weapons, we are nowhere close to beginning negotiations in the Conference on global nuclear disarmament within a time-bound framework.

To my mind, the Conference cannot evade for long its primary mandate from the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament to address the issue of nuclear disarmament in a comprehensive and non-discriminatory manner. To put off nuclear disarmament indefinitely or to seek to park it in bits and pieces in different forums is not tenable, not for long.

Second, I must admit to a degree of personal disappointment, if not frustration, that we have frittered away the opportunity offered by the adoption of a programme of work in May 2009 to begin substantive work, including negotiations. Instead we have poured considerable time and energy into discussions of procedural and institutional reform. The Conference has been called all kinds of names. An innocent bystander has been set upon and berated for an imaginary crime.

In my first speech in this capacity, on 28 February 2008, I recalled that this chamber had been compared to a hall of mirrors – mirrors that often distort rather than reflect the reality of interests that we need to balance while pursuing our mandate.

It remains my hope that we will be able to let the walls of this room truly reflect the reality of our collective interest. There is nothing intrinsically wrong with this forum or its rules. As a body that brings together all the militarily significant States to negotiate as equal members, it continues to be relevant today and into the future. If we talk it down, we do so at our own peril. It is our responsibility to make this forum work. It is our responsibility to help decision makers back home appreciate the significance of our collective interest.

A long time ago, a great Indian warrior hesitated on the verge of an epic battle. He was fortunate to hear counsel that is timeless. The essential message that he heard was that inactivity is not an option. There is no alternative to action, but action has to be based on understanding and not on fear or desire.

My association with the Conference on Disarmament began in 1990. I sat over there as a young and enthusiastic disarmament Fellow. The Conference was then negotiating the Chemical Weapons Convention, a treaty whose importance and contribution to the field of disarmament are acknowledged by one and all.

In the nearly 12 years that I have handled Conference on Disarmament matters here in Geneva and at Headquarters, I have come to realize the importance of reconciling differing perspectives and reaching common understandings. In the field of disarmament and international security, the Conference on Disarmament provides a unique forum where these understandings can be reached and effective action pursued on issues that have an impact on global peace and security.

I leave Geneva with the hope that you will get off to a good start in the Conference next year.

Mr. Minty (South Africa): Mr. President, since this is the first time that I have participated in the work of the Conference on Disarmament in this historic council chamber, allow me to express my sincere appreciation for the warm words of welcome, including those of Ambassador Rao, who is about to leave as I arrive.

It is a pleasure to see you presiding over the Conference. Cuba and South Africa enjoy close bilateral ties and long historical links of genuine solidarity, not least due to the sacrifices made by the people of Cuba in support of our struggle for freedom and democracy in South and southern Africa.

I also wish to extend a word of appreciation to the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. Tokayev, and members of the secretariat for their ongoing support to the work of the Conference.

As the Conference engages in the finalization of its report to the General Assembly during this last part of the 2011 session, we wish to recognize the efforts of this year's six presidents aimed at ending the stalemate that has for too long prevented this body from fulfilling its mandate as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. Given these considerable efforts, it is regrettable that the Conference has once again this year failed to commence negotiations on any of the items on its agenda.

At the outset, let me state unambiguously that South Africa is a strong proponent of nuclear disarmament and an ardent supporter of a nuclear-weapon-free world. For my delegation, nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are inextricably linked, which requires continuous and irreversible progress on both fronts. While progress is being made in strengthening non-proliferation measures, similar progress has not yet been realized in the area of nuclear disarmament, despite some positive momentum in bilateral nuclear arms reduction measures.

As the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regime, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the only international instrument that contains both a legal commitment to the elimination of nuclear weapons and extensive measures to prevent their proliferation, while recognizing the inalienable right of States to the peaceful application of nuclear energy.

The NPT therefore represents a historic bargain between the nuclear-weapon States and the non-nuclear-weapon States, in terms of which the former have undertaken to eliminate their nuclear weapons based on the reciprocal undertaking by the latter not to

pursue the nuclear weapons option. In this regard, we wish to emphasize the importance of the implementation of the action plan of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, which reaffirmed and built upon previous outcomes and includes a wide range of measures aimed at fulfilling the core bargain of the treaty.

While the threat to humanity posed by chemical and biological weapons has long been recognized, and led to the banning of these weapons of mass destruction through negotiations in this very body, the achievement of a world free from nuclear weapons remains an unfulfilled promise and elusive goal.

If the indiscriminate destruction and vast humanitarian consequences posed by weapons of mass destruction are unacceptable, then the continued retention of the nuclear weapons option surely cannot be justified or maintained. It is also clear that the only absolute guarantee against the use of such weapons lies in their complete elimination and the assurance that they will never be produced again.

We are convinced that neither the possession of nuclear weapons nor the pursuit of these weapons can enhance international peace and security. The primary responsibility for undertaking the necessary steps for the elimination of nuclear weapons lies with those States that continue to regard nuclear weapons as central to their security. It is therefore incumbent upon these States to engage, without further delay, in an accelerated process of negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.

We all need to work together to achieve this core objective as we execute our responsibilities as members of the Conference. It is only through such an effort that we will be able to construct a comprehensive framework for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons.

The transformation process in my country fundamentally altered the role of apartheid-era South Africa from that of a threat to international peace and security to that of a democratic State determined to act as a responsible world citizen. This included the early elimination of all its nuclear weapons, a goal for which some of us fought over several decades.

After its inauguration in May 1994, the South African Government therefore committed itself to a policy of non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control which covers all weapons of mass destruction and extends to concerns relating to the proliferation of conventional arms. This policy forms an integral part of South Africa's commitment to democracy, human rights, sustainable development, social justice and environmental protection.

Democratic South Africa's commitment to disarmament was therefore never a goal in itself. Among other things, it is based on our belief that international peace and security cannot be divorced from development – that global security is not achievable when enormous financial and other resources are still being diverted towards the acquisition of more and more destructive capabilities, while more than a billion people around the world continue to suffer from hunger and deprivation.

In addition to this link between security and development, our approach to international security is also based on the reality that the threats of the modern post-cold-war world frequently transcend traditional boundaries within an increasingly interconnected world.

This reality clearly requires a different approach to international peace and security beyond the narrow national security paradigm that dominated the twentieth century, including the balance-of-power struggle of cold war rivalries. We believe that common threats can only be effectively addressed through enhanced international cooperation and

strong international institutions that can respond to our collective security concerns. Our approach in this forum should therefore be one that addresses common security concerns rather than those of certain blocs, regions or security alliances.

The question that confronts the Conference is whether this institution, after so many years of inaction, is able to regain its position as a responsive multilateral institution that can contribute towards building a new consensus on matters affecting our common security. My delegation stands ready to contribute towards exploring options to unlock the potential of this institution.

We will remain actively and constructively engaged in the Conference and other multilateral disarmament forums with a view to seeking solutions that would inevitably require compromises to strengthen the multilateral system and efforts towards the achievement of a world without nuclear weapons. Beyond nuclear weapons, there are also other important disarmament issues on the Conference agenda that require our attention, not least that pertaining to the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

The continued impasse in the Conference is not sustainable and will increasingly affect the relevance and stature of, and international confidence in, the Conference as a multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. To reduce the substantial confidence deficit, it remains our hope that compromises can be found that would allow the Conference to resume substantive work. It is clear to my delegation that this will require a significant effort to build trust, increased flexibility by all Conference members, and a willingness to move beyond absolutist positions and past approaches that have prevented progress. If we fail, we may not be able to revive this institution, which some already believe to be on life support.

I wish to recall the 1996 decision on the expansion of the Conference, which included the admission of my country together with 22 other countries on 17 June 1996 as part of a package deal. While this decision was only brought about after several years of negotiation and lobbying, as well as high-level intervention by our political leadership, the Conference has yet to benefit from the collective wisdom of a more representative membership.

Despite the lack of progress, more countries have expressed an interest in membership. Notwithstanding the regular membership review envisaged under paragraph 2 of the Conference rules of procedure, this issue has not been given proper consideration in recent years. It is our hope that a solution to this impasse can also be found.

It would be remiss of me not to appreciate the role of civil society, which also played a major role in our own democratic transformation. Among the many non-governmental organizations with whom we worked closely during the anti-apartheid struggle was the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, which plays a prominent role on the margins of the Conference.

We believe that it is time for the Conference to seriously consider options for enhancing its interaction with such organizations in order to benefit from their insight and ideas to strengthen the work of the Conference.

In conclusion, Mr. President, in taking up my position as South Africa's Permanent Representative to the Conference, I look forward to working with you and other members of the Conference in a collective effort to restore hope for a more peaceful, secure and prosperous world. I wish to assure you of my delegation's continued cooperation and support in the execution of the Conference's mandate.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. Minty, I thank you for your kind words about my people, about Cuba, and we welcome you with the knowledge in particular that your experience, your wisdom and the leadership you have shown on many occasions,

including as Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement, can provide an important contribution to the work of our Conference. I hope that with all your ideas we can overcome the current impasse in our work. I fully agree with what you said about civil society, about increasing our membership, and so on. I believe that your participation has been very useful.

I would like to consult the members of the Conference, because once we begin negotiating the document I intend to concentrate on specific proposals. A number of delegations have asked to speak during the debate. Some of them will refer directly to the report. I suggest that this debate we are holding should include those delegations that are interested in making a general statement about the report. I repeat, when we start the negotiations, we will accept only those statements specifically concerning the content and format of the report and will avoid general statements. I therefore invite those delegations that intend to make a general statement about the report to do so now, and, I repeat, I do not intend for such statements to be made after we begin our consideration of the report.

Before giving the floor to the Permanent Representative of Australia, Mr. Woolcott, let me say that, having read his statement, I really appreciate the fact that he is not going to talk about the responsibility to protect, but rather about developments concerning his country's initiative on other issues pertaining to the Conference.

Mr. Woolcott (Australia): As this is the first time Australia has taken the floor during your presidency, I wish to congratulate you on assuming the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and offer you Australia's full support in your efforts to finalize the Conference's report.

I make this statement on behalf of Ambassador Suda of Japan.

During the first and second parts of the 2011 session of the Conference on Disarmament, Australia and Japan hosted three "expert side events" at the Palais des Nations on aspects of the proposed treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear explosive weapons or other nuclear devices, commonly known as the fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). Over nine half-day sessions, the side events offered the opportunity for Conference delegations and experts from capitals to exchange views on a number of FMCT-related topics, notably definitions and verification concepts.

The discussions were animated by the active participation of Dr. Bruno Pellaud of Switzerland and representatives of the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. Representatives of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research also attended the side events. The chair's reports of these side events are contained in Conference documents. As the chairs, Ambassador Suda and I hope that those reports will constitute a useful ongoing resource for Conference member and observer States.

This statement offers some final perspectives from Ambassador Suda and me on the side events. In hosting the three side events, Australia and Japan were motivated by United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's call to the Conference on 26 January 2011 for "a basic process to educate each other and build trust which will inform and facilitate the formal process once the CD adopts its work programme". We consider that the side events met this call and achieved three modest but useful results.

First, the side events helped lift the quality of discussion in the Conference on issues relating to the proposed FMCT. The extended impasse in the Conference has eroded knowledge and capacity within Conference delegations. The side events were designed to redress this situation. They were designed to support the Conference and to assist learning by bringing Conference delegations and experts together and providing the opportunity for sustained focus on particular topics. The result has been more substantive interventions

during the formal and informal plenary sessions in which the FMCT was discussed at the Conference's 2011 session.

Second, the side events showed that Conference delegations can build confidence and reciprocate trust, when they make that choice. Ambassador Suda and I noted and valued the demonstrated willingness of a great many Conference delegations to participate in the side events, to listen and learn and share information with open minds and a spirit of collegiality.

Third, the side events helped renew focus on where key substantive differences on the FMCT lie, including on definitions, verification mechanisms, scope and institutional issues. In this way, the side events provided a renewed understanding of the challenges to be faced in negotiating the proposed FMCT, as well as an impetus for further elaboration and clarification of national positions by individual Governments.

At the same time, the interventions of some delegations during the side events offered glimpses of how certain differences in national positions might begin to narrow when FMCT negotiations begin. Of course, the side events and these modest results must be seen in context.

At this time, the Conference is still not taking an essential step towards a world free of nuclear weapons – that is, launching negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices in accordance with the Shannon mandate. Ambassador Suda and I consider this failure deeply regrettable and in need of urgent redress. We also consider that when discussions on fissile material are focused on substantive issues, the value of the proposed treaty is reinforced and the confidence which new verification measures would bring becomes clearer.

Ambassador Suda and I take this opportunity to thank all those who participated in and contributed to the side events, especially those who travelled to Geneva to do so. We extend our particular thanks to Dr. Pellaud for his significant and valuable contribution.

I also join you, Mr. President, and others in bidding farewell to Ambassador Rao. It has been a privilege to work with him, and I acknowledge his important contribution to the issues that we all face. I look forward to seeing him in other venues. I also welcome Ambassador Minty to this body and similarly look forward to the experience and wisdom he brings to our discussions.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank you, Mr. Woolcott, for keeping the Conference informed about these joint efforts by Australia and Japan concerning one of the agenda items. I believe that all members of the Conference appreciate these efforts to be transparent.

In giving the floor to the representative of Canada, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize in particular the efforts of Ambassador Marius Grinius during his term as President of the Conference. He was our first President this year, and his determination had a positive impact on the work carried out by the rest of us.

Ms. Anderson (Canada): Thank you, Mr. President, for the kind words for Ambassador Grinius. I hope that when our new Ambassador arrives shortly she will be able to continue his excellent work.

Mr. President, as you know, on 22 August, Canada resumed its participation in the Conference on Disarmament and its consideration of the Conference's important non-proliferation and disarmament agenda.

On 11 July Canada announced that it would boycott the Conference for the duration of the presidency of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which was an action without precedent for Canada in the history of its membership of the Conference and its

predecessors. My Government felt strongly that as a known proliferator of weapons of mass destruction that was in violation of its non-proliferation obligations, that country could not credibly preside over the world's sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum.

Canada remains deeply concerned about the listed transfer by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of nuclear-weapon- and missile-related materials and technologies, its failure to abide by the agreements reached in the six-party talks, and its failure to comply with the United Nations Security Council resolutions passed in the wake of its October 2006 and May 2009 nuclear weapons tests.

With the presidency of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea now over, Canada is resuming its participation in the Conference with a steadfast commitment to pursuing the substantive work on multilateral non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament instruments.

We maintain that the next most logical step towards a world without nuclear weapons is the negotiation of a non-discriminatory and effectively and internationally verifiable fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT).

In spite of the importance of this non-proliferation and disarmament objective to international peace and security, agreement on a programme of work that includes the FMCT negotiations has been effectively stalled since 1998, with the exception of a short-lived consensus on a programme of work, in document CD/1864, the implementation of which was blocked.

In Canada's view the need to reform the Conference is highlighted by, inter alia, the ability of States that have failed to live up to their non-proliferation commitments to take a leadership role in this forum, and by the abuse of the consensus rule to stymie substantive work.

As my Government has highlighted, Canada will continue to press for reform of the Conference, including the rotating presidency and the broader United Nations disarmament machinery, to address these points within established processes. In the absence of reform, and given continued inaction on long-standing and widely supported priorities, the international community has already demonstrated its willingness to pursue alternative means for advancing its goals when there is a will to do so.

Canada sincerely hopes that the Conference can return in its next session to a real effort in support of non-proliferation and disarmament, beginning with a programme of work that includes a mandate for negotiating an FMCT. If this stalemate at the Conference continues, Canada will increasingly look to advance FMCT negotiations by other means.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to a woman who has given added visibility to the gender perspective in disarmament work, Ambassador Arango of Colombia.

Ms. Arango Olmos (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, I was going to begin by congratulating you on assuming the presidency at this juncture, as I know it is not easy to draft a report on what has happened this year. I truly thank you very much for your words, and I would also like to emphasize something that you mentioned – the issue of gender equity, which we do not see much of here in the Conference on Disarmament. Perhaps if we had greater gender equity the situation in the Conference would be different.

As this is the first time that my delegation has taken the floor under your presidency, allow me to thank you for taking on such an important responsibility and to say that you have the full support of the Colombian delegation in the exercise of your duties. I would also like to thank you and the secretariat for drafting the report of the Conference on Disarmament on the work of its 2011 session. Generally speaking, we think it provides a

comprehensive account of the activities that took place during the year and serves as a good starting point for discussion.

In response to the invitation you extended last week, I will make a short, concise and action-oriented statement with some initial observations from the Colombian delegation about the draft report. Firstly, we believe it is important for the report to mention the reflection we held this session on the strengthening and future of the Conference on Disarmament. We believe that this activity is a significant reference point for the Conference and for possible future action. In this regard, we ask that paragraph 8 of the draft report be amended to mention that exercise.

Secondly, the wording of paragraphs 10 and 11, especially the latter, seems a bit strange to us. It sounds as if the Conference were reporting on the activities of other bodies. We believe that the report should highlight the activities carried out in the Conference and should mention the link between those activities and processes or actions carried out in other settings. Thus paragraph 10 should begin with the meeting held between the Conference on Disarmament and the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters on 30 June, and paragraph 11 should begin with the reference to the 4 August meeting of the Conference on Disarmament, at which discussions took place on the General Assembly meeting held from 27 to 29 July 2011 in follow-up to the high-level meeting of 24 September 2010.

Lastly, although we know that traditionally the report of the Conference on Disarmament consists of a list of the activities carried out during the year, given the crucial political situation the Conference is facing, we believe the 2011 report should be more than just an account of predictable deadlock. From our viewpoint, it would be unfathomable for part II, section G of the report not to contain any substantive elements. That would mean that all our discussions, our messages and pleas for a dynamic Conference that actually fulfils its role were nothing more than rhetoric. It would be a shame not to take advantage of this opportunity to implement the suggestions that were discussed during the year and that could contribute to the revitalization and proper functioning of the Conference, and in particular the undertaking of substantive work at the 2012 session.

During the discussions held in June, several ideas were put forward that could be incorporated into the report, such as establishing a working group or streamlining next year's meetings, for example. If it is truly believed that the process of revitalizing the Conference should be the responsibility of the member States of the Conference, then we hold in our hands an opportunity to demonstrate our true political will to rescue this body from its paralysis, and to send a positive message to the international community, which is becoming increasingly frustrated and impatient with our deadlock. Mr. President, we very respectfully suggest that you explore this course of action and consider the possibility of including practical and feasible ideas in the 2011 report.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Your statement was very stimulating and practical, as always. I wish to raise two issues. Firstly, I would like to ask the delegation of Colombia to remind us of all its specific drafting proposals when we come to the relevant paragraphs later on. Secondly, Cuba has always supported the proposal put forward under the leadership of Colombia regarding the establishment of a working group. We have no objection to including that proposal in the report if that is what the Conference wishes, although it might not be possible to agree on all the details. We are open to considering any proposals that might help the Conference to revitalize its work.

So that we may continue to benefit from the female gender perspective, I now give the floor to the new Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka, Ambassador Kunanayakam, whose excellent work I also had the privilege of witnessing in Cuba.

Ms. Kunanayakam (Sri Lanka): Mr. President, I thank you for your kind words of welcome extended to me, as I am taking part for the first time in this august body.

At the outset, my delegation congratulates you and the delegation of Cuba on the assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament, and we wish to recognize your efforts to guide the work of the Conference on Disarmament. We assure you of our fullest support and cooperation in advancing our work at hand. We also extend our appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Tokayev, for his support to the Conference on Disarmament.

As I begin my tenure in Geneva, I reiterate that Sri Lanka remains fully committed to the work of the Conference on Disarmament, which is the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, and believes that the role of the Conference on Disarmament remains both relevant and valid. I look forward to working with you towards the advancement of our common objective to ensure global peace and security, based on sovereign equality, independence, non-aggression and non-intervention in the internal affairs of sovereign States.

It is imperative that we, members of the Conference on Disarmament, forge a common understanding to demonstrate the much-needed political will to support the work of the Conference.

We are of the view that a transparent, sustainable and credible plan for multilateral nuclear disarmament that also addresses non-proliferation is necessary so that both disarmament and counter-proliferation are advanced in a mutually reinforcing manner.

Sri Lanka supports the convening of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament to discuss and consider issues pertaining to disarmament and remains disappointed at the persistent lack of consensus on convening the session.

Sri Lanka joins the collective voice for the elimination of nuclear weapons from national arsenals, and, until achievement of this objective, 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.

In this context, we reiterate the necessity to start negotiations on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons with a specific time frame, including a nuclear weapons convention.

Sri Lanka has taken a keen interest in achieving the objective of using space-based technologies for peaceful purposes. It is much easier to prevent an arms race from taking place than to control it or roll it back once it has begun. 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. We believe that the Russia-China draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space introduced in February 2008, if implemented, will contribute not only to preventing the emergence of weapons in space but also to ensuring the predictability of the strategic situation.

Mr. President, my delegation looks forward to working closely with you on the adoption of the 2011 report of the Conference and towards the advancement of our common objectives.

Finally, as we bid farewell to Ambassador Rao of India, I wish him well in his new tasks and duties, and also extend a warm welcome to Ambassador Minty of South Africa.

Mr. Endoni (Nigeria): The Group of 21 realizes that we are in the process of finalizing the 2011 report. However, we would like to take advantage of the provisions of

rule 30 to make a full statement on negative security assurances and the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

The Group would like to congratulate Cuba, a staunch member of the Group of 21, on the assumption of the presidency. We would like to wish you all that is necessary to make your work successful. The Group would also like, through you, to congratulate Cuba's predecessor, a fellow member of the Group of 21, for its efforts to move the Conference forward. I am talking about the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The Group takes this opportunity to welcome Ambassador Minty of South Africa to the disarmament community and the G21 family. Ambassador Minty's experience in disarmament is well known, and we look forward to gaining from that wealth of experience. The Group would also like to bid farewell to Ambassador Rao of India and wish him well in his future endeavours.

I will now deliver the first statement on negative security assurances on behalf of the Group of 21.

The Group reaffirms that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. The Group remains convinced that as long as nuclear weapons exist, so also will the risk of their proliferation and possible use remain with us.

Pending the achievement of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, the Group reaffirms the 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. Such an instrument should be clear and credible, without any ambiguity, and should respond to the concerns of all parties.

The Group believes that there is a need to recognize the right of non-nuclear-weapon States not to be attacked by nuclear weapons or threatened by the nuclear-weapon States with their use, and strongly calls upon the nuclear-weapon States to refrain from any such action or threat, whether implicit or explicit. This position is a long-standing one.

The Group underlines the unanimous conclusion of the International Court of Justice that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and to bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.

The Group highlights the objectives laid down in General Assembly resolution 65/54 entitled "Promotion of multilateralism in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation", which, among other things, reaffirms multilateralism as the core principle in resolving disarmament and non-proliferation concerns.

The Group remains deeply concerned about strategic defence doctrines which not only set out rationales for the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, but also maintain unjustifiable concepts of international security based on promoting and developing military alliances' nuclear deterrence policies.

The Group believes that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned, and taking into account the provisions of the first United Nations General Assembly session devoted to disarmament, is a positive step and an important measure towards strengthening global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

In this context, the Group welcomes the nuclear-weapon-free zones established by the treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok, Pelindaba and Semipalatinsk, and Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status. The Group reiterates that in the context of nuclear-

weapon-free zones it is essential that nuclear-weapon States should provide unconditional assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons to all States of such zones.

The Group reiterates its support for the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of all nuclear weapons. To this end, the Group reaffirms the need for the speedy establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East in accordance with Security Council resolution 487 (1981) and paragraph 14 of Security Council resolution 687 (1991) and the relevant General Assembly resolutions adopted by consensus.

The Group of 21 States parties to the NPT welcomes the 2010 NPT Review Conference's endorsement of convening in 2012 a conference to be attended by all States of the Middle East on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

While the Group believes that nuclear-weapon-free zones are positive steps towards strengthening global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, it does not subscribe to the arguments stating that declarations that have been made by non-nuclear-weapon States are sufficient, or that security assurances should only be granted in the context of nuclear-weapon-free zones. In addition, given their geographical limitation, security assurances guaranteed to States members of nuclear-weapon-free zones cannot substitute for universal legally binding security assurances.

The Group recalls that the demand for security assurances was raised by the non-nuclear-weapon States in the 1960s and crystallized in 1968 during the concluding phase of the negotiations for the NPT. The response of the nuclear-weapon States as reflected in resolutions 255 (1968) and 984 (1995) of the Security Council was considered incomplete, partial and conditional by the non-nuclear-weapon States. The demand for assurances persists.

The Group accepts that, while various approaches exist, efforts to conclude a universal and legally binding instrument on security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States should be vigorously pursued. The Group considers that the conclusion of such an instrument would be an important step towards achieving the objectives of arms control, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in all its aspects.

Mr. President, I am now going to read a second statement on behalf of the Group, on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Before I read that, I want to also seize this opportunity on behalf of the Group to welcome the new Sri Lankan Ambassador to this disarmament community and to the G21 family.

The Group believes that the role of space technology in our day-to-day life has become pervasive. Never before have information, communication, banking, economic transactions, navigation and even political and strategic decision-making been so dependent on space-based technologies, which are themselves witnessing rapid growth.

The Group reiterates that outer space and other celestial bodies are the common heritage of mankind and must be used, explored and utilized for the benefit and interest of all mankind in a spirit of cooperation.

The Group reaffirms that the exploration and use of outer space and other celestial bodies shall be for peaceful purposes and shall be carried out for the benefit and in the interest of all countries, irrespective of their degree of economic or scientific development.

The Group stresses that the growing use of outer space increases the need for greater transparency and confidence-building measures and better information on the part of the international community.

The Group believes that all States with major space capabilities have a special responsibility to contribute actively to the objective of the peaceful use of outer space and

of the prevention of an arms race in outer space, and to refrain from actions contrary to that objective and to the relevant existing treaties, in the interest of maintaining international peace and security and promoting international cooperation.

The Group recognizes that prevention of an arms race in outer space would avert a grave danger for international peace and security. The Group emphasizes the necessity of further measures with appropriate and effective provisions for verification to prevent an arms race in outer space in all its aspects.

The Group emphasizes the importance and urgency of preventing an arms race in outer space. In this regard, the Group is deeply concerned about the negative implications of the development and deployment of anti-ballistic-missile defence systems and the pursuit of advanced military technologies capable of being deployed in outer space which have, inter alia, contributed to the further erosion of an international climate conducive to the promotion of disarmament and strengthening of international security.

The Group of 21 stresses that all countries bear a responsibility to refrain from activities that could jeopardize the collective goal of maintaining outer space free from weapons of mass destruction and all other forms of weaponization so as to ensure that its benefits are available to all.

The Group considers that the multilateral disarmament agreements provide the mechanism for States parties to consult one another and to cooperate in solving any problems which may arise in relation to the objectives of, or in the application of, the provisions of the agreements, and that such consultations and cooperation may also be undertaken through appropriate international procedures within the framework of the United Nations and in accordance with the Charter.

The prevention of an arms race in outer space has assumed greater urgency because of legitimate concerns that existing legal instruments are inadequate to deter further militarization of outer space or prevent its weaponization.

The Group further reaffirms its recognition that the legal regime applicable to outer space does not in and of itself guarantee the prevention of an arms race in outer space. For that purpose, the Group stresses the need to consolidate and reinforce that regime and enhance its effectiveness.

In this regard, the Group reaffirms that the Conference on Disarmament is the sole multilateral disarmament negotiation forum of the international community, which has the primary role in substantive negotiations on priority questions of disarmament. The Group considers that it is time to start negotiation in the Conference on Disarmament on matters related to the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

In addition, United Nations General Assembly resolution 65/44 entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space" contains the following observations with regard to the Conference on Disarmament:

(a) The Conference on Disarmament has the primary role in the negotiation of a multilateral agreement or agreements on the prevention of an arms race in outer space in all its aspects;

(b) The Conference should establish a working group under its agenda item entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space" as early as possible – during its 2012 session.

The Group takes note of United Nations General Assembly resolution 65/68 entitled "Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities", which requests the Secretary-General to establish a group of governmental experts to conduct a study, commencing in 2012, on outer space transparency and confidence-building measures.

The Group, while stressing the priority of negotiating legally binding instruments on strengthening the international legal regime on outer space, recognizes that global and inclusive transparency and confidence-building measures, arrived at through broad international consultations, could be important complementary measures. In this regard, the Group welcomes the joint Russian-Chinese initiative of a draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of arms in outer space.

In conclusion, I would like to state on behalf of the Group that individual delegations will take the floor on concerns that have been raised regarding the draft report.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): As I give the floor to the Permanent Representative of Algeria, Mr. Jazaïry, I would like to specially recognize him as the last President with the leadership skills and ability to achieve the adoption of a practical proposal on the programme of work.

Mr. Jazaïry (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, I would like to take this opportunity to follow the advice you gave us at the start of the meeting, namely to make general statements now and more specific statements about the report at a later stage.

I will just mention a few guidelines for the drafting of the report at the end of my general statement.

At this juncture I must pay great homage to your predecessor, the Ambassador of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, for the diligence with which he fulfilled his duties. I would also like to thank Ambassador Rao for the comments he just made, which my delegation fully supports.

I am also pleased to warmly welcome Mr. Minty, the new Permanent Representative of South Africa. I had the honour of collaborating with Mr. Minty and with Ms. Paulette Pierson-Mathy, chair of the Belgian Committee against Colonialism and Apartheid, in the 1980s when I was ambassador to Belgium and Mr. Minty was fighting courageously against the oppressive regime in control of his country.

For many of us Ambassador Minty is a familiar figure in the field of disarmament, and we are happy to see him here among us. His commitment to disarmament issues and his extensive experience, reflected in the inspired statement he made this morning, will enrich and inspire our discussions as we pursue our collective goal, and will also add new momentum to the Conference as needed. I cannot put it better than our President did earlier when I emphasize that we fully support Mr. Minty's view regarding expansion of the Conference and the indispensable role played by NGOs in that regard.

I remember that one of our colleagues, I believe, wondered a while ago why the same countries that encouraged the participation of NGOs in the field of human rights were so wary of their participation in the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

I would also like to wish a warm welcome to the Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka, Ambassador Kunanayakam, and to let her know how delighted we are to continue with her the dialogue and the exchanges we held with her predecessor.

Mr. President, your current assignment comes at a difficult point in the session when we have to reach agreement on the report we will submit to the international community about what we have done during the 2011 session to respond to the many expectations and demands that the General Assembly put forward in a number of resolutions presented by the Secretary-General at the beginning of the session.

Indeed, this session is drawing to a close at a time marked by questioning and fears or concerns about the future of the Conference. Despite our intense debates on the various agenda items, on the programme of work and on the working methods of the Conference, we have not managed to recapture the consensus that we reached two years ago on the

programme of work as set out in document CD/1864, which you mentioned. Thus, we have returned to the usual deadlock in the Conference, which unfortunately does not seem likely to be broken in the near future.

This situation has become unbearable for many countries and could jeopardize the very existence of the Conference. The views expressed during the follow-up to the high-level meeting and the expected debates on the issue at the General Assembly's next session are a testament to the concern and impatience that this situation has engendered.

We must admit, however, that the stalemate in the Conference is the result of a lack of political will, as many have said, and of differences in perceptions of security and defence matters.

At the previous plenary meetings, I outlined my country's assessment of this situation. We do not believe that this deadlock stems from purely procedural issues. Therefore, changing the Conference's working methods or resorting to other frameworks would not solve the underlying problem.

Moreover, given the intermingling of procedural and substantive issues, it is impossible to distinguish between procedural issues that might be resolved by a majority vote and substantive issues concerning States' security that must be dealt with under the consensus rule.

If we seek to negotiate outside the Conference on Disarmament on the four main issues, the instruments concluded will not achieve the expected objective to the extent that some key partners might not be present and that those instruments will then not enjoy the political legitimacy and legal authority required of any international instrument covering security matters.

Negotiations among "like-minded groups" will suffer from the same weaknesses. Such an approach would risk eroding the multilateral framework without providing any viable solutions.

The causes of the deadlock go much deeper than that and therefore cannot be resolved through simple concessions relating to the working methods of the Conference. We might be able to consider certain concessions, but they would not help us break the deadlock.

In reality, the problem is the lack of political will to which I alluded earlier with respect to implementing the Conference's initial mandate as defined in the "decatalogue", namely, concluding multilateral disarmament instruments. I emphasize the word "disarmament", starting with the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Seventy-five years after the adoption of the first United Nations General Assembly resolution on nuclear disarmament, tens of thousands of nuclear weapons are being maintained on the basis of nuclear doctrines that date back to the cold war and that have found a new *raison d'être* in the claim of deterrence, but this is not the weak deterring the mighty, but rather the mighty deterring the danger posed by the weak. The world has been turned on its head!

It is true that a large majority of countries still take interest in the Conference, as evidenced by the participation of the President of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General of the United Nations and a number of dignitaries. I should mention first of all the appointment of a high-level representative, the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, to whom I would like to convey my respects and appreciation for the work he is doing to help us overcome this impasse.

It should also be recognized that this continued deadlock damages the Conference's credibility, and that if we want to preserve the Conference's role of the sole multilateral

disarmament negotiating forum, as several of my colleagues said this morning, then we really need to strive together to create a framework, even a simplified one, that would allow us to resume substantive work.

It is all very well to say so, but we must find a way to give real substance to what has for some time now been a mantra. In this context, the member States must collectively take on the challenges we are facing and agree to engage in the negotiation, too long delayed, of multilateral instruments that provide real and collective security and have as their goal genuine disarmament, not just non-proliferation.

It is important to formulate a comprehensive and balanced programme of work that addresses everyone's security threats and interests.

The first priority we must all agree on is the elimination of nuclear weapons. This is an obligation that, as was mentioned earlier, the International Court of Justice rightly confirmed in its advisory opinion of July 1996. The nuclear-weapon States have reaffirmed their unequivocal commitment to completely eliminating their nuclear arsenals. The objective of nuclear disarmament must be codified through legal provisions that delegitimize the use of such weapons.

In this light, the Conference's programme of work would seek to identify the elements and means needed to achieve this goal in the long term. In this context, a treaty on banning the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices and on the gradual elimination of stocks would be an essential element in the nuclear disarmament process.

Such a treaty should be part of a comprehensive approach paving the way for nuclear disarmament. It should be supplemented, as a matter of priority, with other measures for re-examining the principles underlying nuclear doctrines, with a view to limiting the role of nuclear weapons in defence policies.

The goal would be to give practical meaning to the principle of undiminished security for all. In this regard, the granting of credible and binding negative security assurances is a priority for States such as mine that have committed themselves to remaining free of nuclear weapons.

We recognize, as do others, that the primary responsibility of any government is to protect its citizens and its interests. That is in fact our mission here, as representatives of our respective States, but we believe that national interests should take into account the common interest of all humankind, and that security considerations should not be viewed separately from overall considerations that pertain to humanity as a whole.

Moreover, it is inconceivable that a legitimate security need of non-nuclear-weapon States should be regarded as a danger or threat to the security of nuclear-weapon States.

In this regard, I wish to express my full support for the statement just made by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the Group of 21, and also for what he just said regarding the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

Algeria continues to believe that the decision contained in document CD/1864 constitutes a starting point for work through various mechanisms that ultimately can succeed only if the various positions and interests converge towards a consensus. Mind you, I said "starting point": I am not saying that it must remain in its current form; the text may change, but we at least have a logical framework. After all, we can be for or against a document, but we cannot be for or against logic; we must be logical in everything we do.

If things are not moving in a positive direction, it seems to us that the best way to deal comprehensively with the deadlock currently affecting all multilateral disarmament

mechanisms would be to convene a fourth special session of the General Assembly, as the representative of Sri Lanka suggested earlier.

We could of course establish another commission — what the English call a royal commission, or what we might call a “committee of the wise” — to search for the legendary grail that we have been so earnestly seeking, but recent experience indicates that we should not be overly optimistic in this regard.

Generally speaking, the draft report that we have received aims to reflect the work of the Conference in a factual manner, as required by the rules of procedure. It could nevertheless be improved further to avoid repeated references to the aforementioned document, and we must also find a way to include the relevant elements that have recently emerged clearly and are useful for our discussions, while distinguishing them from our own work during the session.

Mr. Baati (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, I wish to make a general statement that does not concern the excellent report that you have submitted to the Conference. As this is the first time I have taken the floor, allow me first of all to extend to you on behalf of my country, Tunisia, heartfelt congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference. Tunisia and Cuba have always maintained excellent relations.

I can assure you of my delegation’s full cooperation to help you in your difficult tasks, including that of getting the report adopted. Allow me also to warmly, albeit belatedly, congratulate Mr. Tokayev on his appointment to the post of Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament. We are confident that his diplomatic experience and in-depth knowledge of the field of disarmament will provide a tangible and valuable contribution to our Conference. My delegation is also very willing to work with the Secretary-General to move forward on the path towards achieving together the Conference’s noble goals.

Mr. President, dear colleagues, it goes without saying that the Conference on Disarmament has for some years been going through a difficult period. We should not be indifferent to the lethargy that has taken hold after what was a promising beginning. While the world is experiencing extraordinary upheavals that are generating new challenges, and the international community is showing signs of solidarity in the face of unrest, our Conference, which, it must be remembered, is the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, seems to be abandoning its core mission.

It is high time to begin working together with conviction and pragmatism to reset the bar and strive for greater success.

Many representatives of member States have given their assessment. I listened with great satisfaction to what the Ambassador of Algeria just said. The Conference suffers from a two-pronged problem.

Firstly there is a political problem, in the sense that member States tend to focus on their individual interests at the expense of collective action that could lead to more conclusive and more durable results. There is also a structural problem, given that the Conference’s rules of procedure require consensus — synonymous with compromise and agreement — even if only at an achievable minimum level.

A glimmer of hope emerged at one point; it shone on the horizon and gave us a breath of fresh air that promised to restore a new climate of confidence. But the optimism quickly faded, leaving behind a paralysis that has led to the current stalemate in the Conference.

Relevant analyses and commendable initiatives have just been mentioned. While they have been put forward in an effort to revitalize this body, we are still far from the path of salvation.

We welcome the calls for the Conference to engage in frank discussion of its future, and for in-depth consultations to pave the way for agreement among members.

The status quo and deadlock have never been inevitable, and the negotiation techniques used in the multilateral arena are very innovative. We must strive to use all possible means to lift the Conference out of this rut and put it back on the negotiating track for the benefit of all countries.

Tunisia, which, after the profound changes it has recently undergone, has confirmed its commitment to international law, peace and security, believes that the international community needs to redouble its efforts to create a better world for all, a more stable world free from all weapons of mass destruction.

This Conference is being called upon to fulfil the role that its founders bestowed on it.

Mr. Orgil (Mongolia): Mr. President, as I am taking the floor for the first time under your presidency, let me first of all extend to you my warmest congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation. My delegation also joins the expression of sincere gratitude to our colleague the Ambassador of India, who is about to leave Geneva. We also warmly welcome our new colleagues in this hall.

As to the work of the Conference, my delegation fully shares the growing frustration over the long-standing impasse and the inability to progress to negotiations. In this respect we welcome and highly value the efforts being made by the United Nations Secretary-General. Expressing our concern about the continuing stalemate in the Conference, we are willing to consider other proposals towards revitalizing its work and to make our own contribution.

As we are about to consider the draft report, my Government feels it necessary to make known its position on one of the core issues for this Conference, namely international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

Mongolia has long supported the view that assuring non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons through extending to them unequivocal and legally binding security assurances strengthens the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

The 2010 NPT Review Conference agreed as much when it stated, in its action plan, that States should immediately begin substantive discussion, here in the Conference, with a view to elaborating recommendations dealing with all aspects of this issue. My delegation shares the view that a legally binding international instrument on security assurances should be part of such a discussion.

As we make efforts to achieve a world without nuclear weapons, negative security assurances can serve as an important, though ultimately interim, measure in promoting non-proliferation and reducing the role of nuclear weapons in today's world.

The legitimate interest of non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in receiving security assurances was recognized in United Nations Security Council resolution 984 (1995), which noted the security assurances, albeit of a non-binding nature, contained in the unilateral statements by the five nuclear-weapon States.

Legally binding security assurances are extended to States parties to nuclear-weapon-free zones via the ratification by nuclear-weapon States of the protocols to the treaties establishing such zones. These are an important non-proliferation and disarmament measure that needs to be expanded to include all protocols to all such treaties.

My delegation welcomes the recent ratification by the Russian Federation of the protocols to the Pelindaba Treaty and the recent steps taken by the United States towards the ratification of the protocols to the Pelindaba and Rarotonga treaties.

Mongolia strongly believes that nuclear-weapon-free zones help enhance global and regional peace and security, strengthen nuclear non-proliferation and advance the objectives of nuclear disarmament. We call on nuclear-weapon States to work constructively towards ratification of relevant protocols.

While emphasizing the importance of negative security assurances to avert the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States, my delegation believes that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of such weapons.

My delegation therefore urges continued action by nuclear-weapon States to honour the unequivocal undertaking they have made with regard to the elimination of their nuclear weapons.

Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status, declared nearly 20 years ago and by now internationally welcomed and recognized, not only enhances my country's international security but also constitutes a contribution of ours to the goals of nuclear non-proliferation, disarmament and regional and international security.

As such, it promotes, from the perspective of our unique geographical location, what nuclear-weapon-free zones seek to promote. We therefore work closely with nuclear-weapon-free zones and are a regular participant in the gatherings of States parties to such zones. We believe, however, that it is important for us to further consolidate and strengthen this status by defining it internationally. To this end, we are currently consulting with the States concerned and thus making our own practical contribution to the process of disarmament and non-proliferation.

In this respect, I wish to mention the significance of United Nations General Assembly resolution 65/70 on Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status and also express our appreciation to the delegations of the Russian Federation and the United States for their readiness to continue to work with Mongolia on strengthening that status as expressed on 10 February of this year.

May I, lastly, express my delegation's desire to see this body take up substantive work on negative security assurances as indicated in the decision contained in document CD/1864. We stand ready to contribute.

Mr. Daryaei (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. President, we are pleased that you are presiding over this august body. Allow me to associate myself with the statement of the G21 just delivered by the representative of Nigeria. I would also like to join other colleagues in bidding farewell to Ambassador Rao of India, and in wishing him all the best.

Allow me also to welcome Ambassador Minty of South Africa, with whom I had the privilege of working closely for many years, and also the ambassadors of Sri Lanka and Tunisia, and to assure them of the full support and cooperation of my delegation.

Since the main topic of this meeting relates somehow to the report, I would like to elaborate on some general positions of my delegation relating to the report. We take the principled position that the Conference report should meet three criteria: first, it should be factual; second, it should be procedural; and, third, it should only relate to the reflection of

activities and work within the Conference. We will raise our specific points during the paragraph-by-paragraph reading of the report.

Mr. Kwon Haeryong (Republic of Korea): Mr. President, since this is my first intervention during the resumed presidency, I would like to begin by congratulating you on your assumption of the very challenging yet vital responsibility of being President. I assure you of my delegation's support and cooperation.

I would also like to express my appreciation to departing Ambassador Rao for his contribution and wish him all the best.

Today we have come to discuss the Conference's annual report to the United Nations General Assembly. However, it is a pity that we have to witness another year of the Conference without the adoption of a programme of work. I am wondering whether the solution to the inactivity of the Conference, which has lasted for 15 years, cannot be found inside the Conference itself. I am afraid this annual report will be yet more evidence of the inaction of the Conference.

Now we have the annual report in front of us. As the annual report states, it is true that there was some effort inside and outside the Conference to revitalize it this year, including debates and discussion in the plenary and informal meetings of the Conference, consultation with the United Nations Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters, and the General Assembly's debate on the Conference. However, these efforts could not move the Conference forward because each country did not demonstrate flexibility, only focusing on repetition or elaboration of its formal position.

The wording in part III of the draft annual report, on substantive work, bears witness to this situation. If you look at this part, you can easily see that more or less the same wording is used to summarize the result of discussions on all the agenda items.

How long do we have to present this kind of stereotypical annual report to the United Nations General Assembly? It may be plausible to insist that external factors such as regional security considerations largely account for the deadlock, but I believe that the Conference can make progress by reinterpreting or reforming its internal operating mechanisms, such as procedures.

Along with these efforts inside the Conference, as my delegation has repeatedly insisted, it would be useful to establish a group of eminent persons to find solutions to overcome the current difficulties in the Conference. It goes without saying that the Conference should be member-driven. However, I think it is also possible to request help from outside when we cannot solve a problem inside the Conference. I do not think this contradicts the member-driven approach principle.

Now I would like to request that we all demonstrate the necessary flexibility and effort to prove that there is political will. I wish to see the Conference once again hold high the torch guiding disarmament and non-proliferation efforts by showing its capability and collective wisdom.

Lastly, I would like to welcome the ambassadors of Sri Lanka, South Africa and Tunisia. I am sure that their experience will contribute to the discussions in the Conference.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): As I give the floor to the Permanent Representative of Chile, Mr. Oyarce, who is a former president of this Conference and made enormous efforts and really helped me to understand certain issues and to become familiar with the Conference, I would like to recognize him for his work.

Mr. Oyarce (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all I would like to convey to Ambassador Rao, through the delegation and the representative of India, our recognition of his work and, at a personal level, of all that he did to help me during Chile's presidency

whenever I asked for his opinion. I would also like to welcome Ambassador Minty and to ask the representative of South Africa to kindly pass on to him the message that, in our view, his presence at this Conference is essential. I also wish to extend a special welcome to the Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka. I know her personally, and I am confident that she will make a contribution to our work.

We thank you, Mr. President, for the efficient way in which you have taken on the responsibility of preparing the report on the work of the Conference on Disarmament. I will refer briefly to this subject since that is what you requested.

We value the professional assistance of the secretariat in preparing this draft. The fact that the draft report does not have any added or substantive value compared to the one submitted last year indicates that, once again, the Conference has not been able to fulfil its mandate as a negotiating body. This is not the time to analyse the multiple causes, not all of which are procedural, that are making it difficult to gain political momentum. The Permanent Representative of Algeria made an interesting observation, and I think I largely agree with him. So, then, this situation will probably lead us to submit a merely factual report. Its factual nature should not be interpreted as a way of avoiding what has happened. A factual and precise report must be true to reality. In this regard, we share the concern expressed this morning by a former president, the Permanent Representative of Colombia, regarding the inclusion of a reference to the observations, messages, suggestions and also concerns expressed about revitalization and about what is happening in the Conference. We understand the limitations imposed by reality, but it would probably be possible to attempt a draft that is inclusive, that suits everyone and that sends a political signal, however slight, about what is happening here.

It is clear that there have been various discussions this year about the situation the Conference on Disarmament is facing. We have received messages, here in this meeting room, from the Secretary-General of the United Nations, from high-level representatives of various countries and from the Secretary-General of the Conference himself. These things happened; these are real facts. Logically speaking, we should be able to consider and, where possible, include some of their ideas about these concerns — many of which were shared — in the report. Realistically, however, because realism and naivety are two somewhat closely linked concepts, we should admit that this will probably not be possible. In this situation — and I wish to highlight this point — it is easy to imagine how this will be interpreted in the General Assembly, how the factual report is going to enable certain steps to be taken. Whether those steps are positive or negative is not for me to judge, but the General Assembly will not be indifferent. We can imagine how this could affect the political decisions that will be taken in New York regarding issues that have been particularly sensitive in this Conference this year. We all know which ones they are. Specifically, and in line with a pragmatic and realistic approach, we are flexible about moving paragraphs 8 and 9, as they do not address issues explicitly contained in the agenda, but it does seem to us that they should include an account of the issues and concerns analysed in the Conference. It is difficult to ignore the political significance of these references.

It could also be argued that paragraph 10 does not pertain to any item on the agenda. It could be pointed out that the report would contain information about activities carried out by other bodies, but without a doubt the idea of initiating contact between the Advisory Board and the Conference came from the Conference itself, and it was during Chile's presidency that the President highlighted the need and the opportunity for those bodies to hear various opinions about the situation facing this forum. This is an event that should be reported. We are also flexible regarding the way in which it is reflected in the document, but it seems to us that these events should be part of the political momentum that the

Conference should convey to New York. We also believe that paragraph 11 should begin with a reference to the meeting of the Conference on Disarmament held on 4 August.

Mr. President, I will conclude by saying that we are ready to cooperate with you to create something with minimal — and I repeat, minimal — added value, or simply a purely factual account.

Before I finish I would like to bid farewell to the Fellows until we meet again. I was also a Fellow once, and I am sure that in the future they will help to raise awareness about disarmament and non-proliferation in the course of the discussions and decision-making processes in their respective countries and within the multilateral system.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I am counting on your help to improve the report, given your experience and wisdom, and I am also counting on the will of the rest of the members to work towards that goal.

Ms. Fogante (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, although we would have preferred to address these issues when discussing the relevant sections of the report, since some delegations have already put forward general guidelines for the report, as you asked us to do, allow me to clarify a few things on my delegation's behalf.

Firstly, I of course thank you for distributing the document promptly, which will, we hope, facilitate its adoption by consensus before the end of this session. My comments follow the same logic as that applied earlier by the permanent representatives of Colombia and Chile, as we believe that some of the elements they referred to should be included in paragraphs 8 to 11 of the first section.

Generally speaking, my delegation believes that we should maintain the logic of paragraph 8 by referring to the debates held in the Conference on Disarmament about the high-level meeting of 24 September 2010. Following the same logic, we should retain the reference to the follow-up mechanism — namely the Advisory Board — and to the recent special meeting of the General Assembly held on 27 July 2011. My delegation believes that these references should be retained in the document. However, as the permanent representatives of Colombia and Chile mentioned, we should frame them strictly in the context of the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

There is an issue that we would like to address, in paragraph 10 for example, regarding the action taken by the Secretary-General. We believe that it would be very appropriate to refer to the Secretary-General's viewpoint, but only in the context of what he said to us in this forum. To that end, we have in paragraph 5 a description of the statement he made at a formal meeting on 26 January of this year, and perhaps we could add to that a reference to his comments on the high-level meeting. More importantly, we believe there should be a reference to the informal meeting that took place between the members of the Conference on Disarmament and the Secretary-General on that same day, 26 January 2011. We note that such a reference is not included in the report, and we believe that perhaps this is a good opportunity to focus on the Secretary-General's viewpoint and the dialogue he held with the members of the Conference on the salient aspects of the high-level meeting. By the same logic, we agree with retaining the reference to the informal meeting with the Advisory Board on 30 June 2011, as the Permanent Representative of Chile proposed a few moments ago.

Another issue, which I mentioned previously, is that of the formal meeting convened under the presidency of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in follow-up to the General Assembly meeting held on 27 July 2011. We believe that a reference in the report to that meeting might also be appropriate. It is in the context of that formal meeting, held on 4 August 2011, that we could refer to document CD/1911, which was submitted by a group of countries.

Lastly, as the Permanent Representative of Colombia already pointed out, the Conference held two informal meetings on 9 and 14 June, at which it attempted to assess the current state of the Conference and identify ways to strengthen and revitalize it. In our view, these two meetings constitute specific actions taken by the Conference concerning its situation and go beyond mere follow-up to invitations or initiatives originating in other forums such as the General Assembly. For this reason, we believe that the report should include a separate reference to these meetings convened under Colombia's presidency. We thus urge you to consider including such a mention in part II, section G, of the report, along with the document submitted by the delegation of Colombia.

As we continue our consideration of the report paragraph by paragraph, my delegation will also reiterate certain drafting proposals and make others concerning various paragraphs, but these are the most important general points we wished to make.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Once all the statements have been made I will try to come to an agreement with all of you on how to conduct the negotiation of the document, but for now I thank you all for your statements and for the general ideas put forward regarding the document.

Ms. Jáquez Huacuja (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to start by reiterating my delegation's support for you and the delegation of Cuba, which is an ally of Mexico in this work of the Conference on Disarmament. I would also like to express our regret, but also our good wishes, to Ambassador Rao of India, and to wish him all the best in his new assignment and let him know that he can always count on Mexico's support and friendship. In the same vein, I would like to welcome the new permanent representatives of Sri Lanka and South Africa, two countries that have also fought alongside Mexico in many battles. We will be facing more, hopefully fruitful battles on behalf of disarmament in this and other forums.

Mr. President, first of all I would like to thank you for promptly and expeditiously distributing the draft report and for the work you and the secretariat have done to provide us with a basis on which to begin our work. My delegation would like to join the representatives of Colombia, Chile and Argentina in suggesting and requesting that the allusion to the direction and tone of the discussions held in the Conference this year concerning its revitalization, which was unintentionally omitted, be included in the report.

On several occasions my delegation has expressed what can no longer be termed our frustration, but rather our conviction that the current situation in the Conference is unacceptable, and we have listened attentively to various delegations' statements that it would be unprecedented or somehow impossible for decisions or discussions about the Conference on Disarmament to take place in other, unrelated forums. In our view, it is even more unacceptable for discussions held in the Conference, by Conference members themselves, on the self-criticism needed to move forward in this forum not to be duly reflected in the report. My delegation therefore believes that part II, section G, should be strengthened, perhaps by listing the activities relating to this issue that took place this year, including plenary meetings. I also wish to remind you of everything that the delegations of Colombia, Chile and Argentina have already said, and that during its presidency the delegation of Chile convened plenary meetings on the topic of revitalizing the Conference. A passing reference to this fact is included in the description of the activities of the presidency, but we believe that it belongs in section G, which deals with proposals for discussing revitalization and not proposals for improving the Conference. Moreover, we believe that close attention should be paid to the wording when we reach the discussion of this subject in paragraph 19.

No draft decision on establishing a programme of work was ever distributed during the 2011 session. This is a fact, and my delegation believes that we should make an effort to

send additional factual information to the General Assembly. We therefore suggest including wording that would indicate to the General Assembly that this was the reason why the Conference on Disarmament was not able to adopt or implement a programme of work during the 2011 session.

Mr. Ri Jang Gon (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Mr. President, first of all, my delegation wishes to once again congratulate Cuba for the important assumption of the Conference presidency in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Conference. My delegation also takes this opportunity to express our gratitude to the member States that helped my country during our presidency.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made just now by the representative of Nigeria. Having said this, my delegation is somewhat compelled to draw the attention of the member States to the provocative and confrontational remarks made by the representative of Canada.

As we all heard today, Canada revealed the true colour of its action towards the Conference's work. The Canadian action is ill-minded. Canada's action is not simply to be regarded as something vis-à-vis one country but as vis-à-vis the member States of the Conference and the Conference itself as a whole.

Because of that, Canada's ill-minded action was not welcomed. Nobody joined Canada. Canada discarded its membership in the Conference. During our presidency of the Conference, Conference members were very comfortable, and the Conference was going very well, because we did not have the presence of Canada, which is bent on destroying the Conference's work.

Now we have heard the remarks made by Canada today. I doubt that the Conference knows how we can work now in the presence of Canada, which is really bent on destroying the Conference's work. Civilized nations dedicated to disarmament and a nuclear-free world do not act like Canada.

The Conference will be very comfortable without Canada. Canada cannot escape its responsibility for its ill-minded action. My delegation strongly rejects this action by Canada. With regard to extending Conference membership, many countries are waiting to join the Conference. We could exchange Canada for one of those countries.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I intend to facilitate the work of the Conference, and to do so I need all of you, every State, including the observer States – and perhaps we can take this opportunity to welcome them, especially those that have expressed their desire to become members. I am counting on every single one of you. I truly believe that the battlefield lies outside this meeting room, and I really count on you to cooperate and make great efforts to come up with the report of the Conference, which the international community is expecting from us.

Having said that, I am going to ask you to do the following. I want us to reach an agreement, because once we agree on this I am going to enforce it strictly. I am going to be equally strict with everyone, including with ambassadors, if they stay in the meeting room. Otherwise they should leave their delegates in the meeting room and take the opportunity to get some work done at the mission, because I think that from this point on we need to focus on negotiation. This means that once we begin considering the document paragraph by paragraph no one should take the floor with the intention of arguing and speaking for a long time. I really think that no State will be convinced by smoke and mirrors, because we all know what instructions we have been given and what we are looking for in the document we adopt.

This means that I will ask the delegations that take the floor to make specific drafting proposals with regard to adding, amending or simply deleting text, and I ask each

delegation not to speak for longer than five minutes. We do not have red, yellow and green lights here, but I really think I will have to indicate when it is time for a red light, because if we are going to be efficient — and people expect this and have asked this of me, as the facilitator of this process more than as President — I think that we should start working, start negotiating straight away, and negotiation is not achieved through lengthy rhetoric and repetition of positions we are all familiar with. In any case, I thank those delegations that reiterated their positions in their initial statements.

The time for such statements is now over, and, keeping in mind my own proposal on how to conduct our work, I will keep my opening remarks brief. I hope that you will all agree with me and not need to speak.

Mr. Reid (United States of America): I will speak very quickly, just on paragraph 7. In fact our Secretary of State, Hillary Rodham Clinton, did have the pleasure of addressing the Conference on Disarmament during this session. I recognize that in preparing this draft the drafters were just trying to put together some statements ...

The President: Sir, may I interrupt you, please? We are going to go paragraph by paragraph, and when we reach paragraph 7 you can raise the point. That is not a rejection, but I prefer to start with the first paragraph, and when we arrive at paragraph 7 we are going to take your proposal fully into account. Is that acceptable to you?

Mr. Reid (United States of America): No problem. Thank you very much.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I had expected to be halfway through the first reading of the document by now, and that is not the case. But life has taught us to be flexible and to adapt to the changing situation in the United Nations.

I ask you once again to reboot, so to speak, and adapt to the new style of working, and I ask all delegations that speak to be specific in their statements. We will continue. I do not think it will be possible to finish the document in the remaining 40 or 45 minutes of the morning meeting — I am sure it will not. I intend to resume our work here at 3 p.m. After that we will decide how to continue next week.

Mr. Jazaïry (Algeria): I don't know whether you want to start this exercise now, but I would suggest that we have an informal meeting to discuss this issue, rather than do so in this formal session, and perhaps resumption would be a better idea. But it is up to you, Sir. I am just making this suggestion — that we conclude this meeting now and engage in an informal meeting at a time that you may find appropriate.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I have no problem with moving to informal mode right now, but I would like to point out that, while I really have no objection to conducting the negotiations through either a formal or an informal process, what I do really want is for whatever format we use to enable us to have the highest possible level of transparency and to offer observer States the opportunity to participate actively in the process. But I have no problem with this if it will really aid our work. Let us move to informal mode.

Mr. Jazaïry (Algeria): My proposal would be just for the organization of the discussion. I am not yet ready to make my contribution.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Does any delegation have any problem with the proposed approach? Otherwise, if you are really tired, perhaps it is better to begin directly at 3 p.m., because I see some rather exhausted faces after what has been a long, interesting debate, for which we are thankful, most of all because several delegations have provided some very useful information. But anyway, I believe that, on the basis of the proposal by the Permanent Representative of Algeria, it is a good idea to take the time to rest, have lunch, eat well and come back full of energy and eagerness to move straight into negotiations in the afternoon.

Mr. Vipul (India): I do not have a comment on converting the plenary into an informal session and continuing our work in the afternoon. I took the floor just to thank all the delegations that have conveyed their appreciation for the work of our Ambassador and for his future assignment. I will duly convey all their comments to the Ambassador.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I believe that the sentiments expressed towards Ambassador Rao are well-deserved; what we expressed, really, is this Conference's general sentiment towards the work carried out by your Permanent Representative. That said, since I do not see any objection, we are going to end this meeting. It has been explained to me that, in the interest of the needs of our work, and in order to be precise, we should conclude this meeting, and then at 3 p.m. we will begin a new meeting of the Conference.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.