
Conference on Disarmament

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English

Final record of the one thousand two hundred and twenty-seventh plenary meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Wednesday, 1 June 2011, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Ms. Alicia Victoria Arango Olmos(Colombia)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Good morning everyone. I would like to begin by saying that, although not everybody is here, I know that many people have commitments in human rights work and the International Labour Organization. I also wish to tell you that I need to start now as our Secretary-General, Mr. Tokayev, has to attend a very important meeting at 10.30 a.m. and it is essential for him to be here at least for the beginning of this presidency. I declare open the 1227th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Firstly, I would like to say what an honour it is for my delegation and my country to take the Chair of the Conference on Disarmament. I can assure you that I will demonstrate full commitment and responsibility, and act with complete transparency in the performance of my duties and functions.

We would like Colombia's term in the Chair to be distinguished by its efficiency, inclusiveness, flexibility and strict adherence to the rules of procedure.

Secondly, I would like to acknowledge the tremendous efforts made by my predecessors in the Chair to get this Conference started again. The debates on the agenda items initiated by the Canadian, Chilean and Chinese Presidents were very interesting and enabled countries to reaffirm their positions on the issues before us.

Unfortunately, no significant progress has been made. In spite of this, the Chair in Colombian hands wishes to uphold the efforts made to date, preserve what has been achieved and build on it.

As I mentioned in my statement last week, the Conference on Disarmament has attracted the attention of the international community, which is closely observing its development and its ability to overcome its deadlock. The messages we are receiving from various parties on how patience is wearing thin, how the status quo is impossible to maintain and how alternative measures need to be taken should be seen as a warning sign. The world has changed, and tolerance of deadlocks and unproductive situations is no longer an option.

However, we know that, even on this point, members of the Conference have differing views. There are various opinions on the current situation in the Conference and on the decisions which can be made regarding this body.

We attach the highest importance to the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral forum for disarmament negotiations, and we would like to see a vibrant Conference which fulfils its mandate.

However, the Conference on Disarmament is only one part in the disarmament machinery and, like all parts which cease to work, it must be repaired or modified so that the cogs can start turning again. Our ultimate goal, our *raison d'être*, has to be more important than the mechanism. We must not forget that we have taken on the responsibility for disarmament in order to help strengthen international security and the security of all our citizens.

For this reason, during Colombia's term in the Chair, we would like to focus on establishing a frank and constructive dialogue regarding the current situation in the Conference on Disarmament and on the action we could take to strengthen the Conference.

Our first task is to push for a discussion on the programme of work, an issue that the Chair would like to propose for our plenary meeting today, without of course forgetting that every State can raise any subject under paragraph 30 of our rules of procedure.

Concerning the programme of work, it is clear that the lack of agreement persists in 2011 and that we have not been able to overcome the deadlock.

I would like to stimulate discussion on this subject by sharing a few reflections from the first round of consultations which we have conducted over the last few weeks. These are ideas which have already been touched upon in the wise analyses by previous Presidents and the statements of delegations.

Firstly, I would like to briefly mention the debate on whether one agenda item or another is ripe for discussion. It is clear that member States have different views on which items are ready for negotiation. These discrepancies are reflected in the mandates which member States want to feature in the Conference's programme of work.

It is true that different parties in the international community have called for a start to negotiations on a treaty on the prohibition of the production of fissile material.

However, even in relation to the FMCT, we have seen during the debates over the past few weeks that there are key differences, particularly on the issue of stockpiles, which present some States with paradoxes in terms of how ready an item is for negotiation, or the actual level of disagreement. It is also apparent from the debates held this year that some believe that the items on the prevention of an arms race in outer space or negative security assurances are at a level of readiness and consensus similar to that of the FMCT.

I would now like to mention some questions which were raised earlier but have not yet been addressed, such as the ability of the Conference and the delegations to negotiate more than one item or the idea that the next logical step could be to move forward in parallel on more than one agenda item.

Secondly, I would like to mention the issue of political will, by which is meant flexibility and creativity.

It is the issue of political will between member States which has prevented us from arriving at strong agreements and a programme of work. The problem does not lie in the drafting of the mandates but in the shortcomings in our commitments.

Several approaches have been put forward. For 13 years we have tried to play with language, with the help of dozens of reference documents, looking for ways to reach consensus, but to no avail. The most recent solution was the wording proposed by Chile in its non-paper. However, although it was general and could accommodate the different interests of the delegations, it was not feasible.

The idea of a simplified programme of work which does not contain mandates and which functions as a simple schedule, as specified in our rules of procedure, has not found favour either.

None of these approaches have been sufficient because, I repeat, language is not the problem. We believe that we will only be able to break out of this deadlock if a clear and strong political will is demonstrated.

For this reason we must avoid prejudging any negotiations or deliberations on any of our agenda items. It is true, and to be expected, that there are national security considerations that affect the positions of countries and the dynamics of the Conference. These considerations are understandable, but they do not justify the stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament. The best way to strengthen national security is to promote international security and mutual trust.

Finally, a third issue we would like to mention is the problem in the methodology that we have been following to date with a view to adopting the programme of work.

Until now, the programme of work has been left to the good fortune and the ability of each President who has only four weeks to start a new search for an elusive consensus.

As soon as the President runs into a lack of agreement, his or her ability to make proposals is hindered.

This is how we get into extreme situations where Presidents refuse to present documents to the plenary because the exercise is futile. Not only do we refrain from negotiating our commitments regarding the mandates, but also we do not dare to discuss these commitments or our differences with a view to identifying them and finding out where we all stand.

In view of the above we have emphasized throughout the 2011 session that the President helps to facilitate the work of the Conference, but cannot take on a responsibility that belongs to all the members of the Conference. We are aware of this and assume the responsibilities of the Chair.

We believe that everybody needs to have this discussion, in order to build consensus together this year. It is our view that we must all discuss our programme of work in a comprehensive and frank manner, hopefully on the basis of specific proposals.

We would therefore like to invite all the countries to promote and propose texts, whether individually, collectively or as part of a regional group. We encourage them to be proactive and creative. If a specific proposal were to be put forward by a group of countries, it would give political backing to the drafts that the President has to present to the Conference, and would allow us to hold plenary sessions. This approach is in keeping with the rules of procedure and has been used before in the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

This does not mean that the Chair is abandoning the pursuit of a programme of work. On the contrary, we will continue with our consultations and our efforts to achieve this goal.

We hope that these ideas and reflections we are highlighting today will be of use for the discussion scheduled for today and will enable us to find new approaches and formulas which will smooth the path to the adoption of a programme of work that is comprehensive, balanced and implementable.

Turning to the list of speakers for today's meeting and the delegates who would like to take the floor, I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Brazil.

Mr. de Macedo Soares (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): Madam President, the beginning of your term in the Chair of the Conference on Disarmament is an important occasion for all of us, and especially for the Brazilian delegation. We are witnessing a special moment in the history of this forum, which is now over 30 years old. During this period, we have encountered and overcome many difficulties.

However, perhaps for the first time, several member States have started to question the very existence of the Conference on Disarmament. It is not the institution itself which worries us, but rather the political basis for the multilateral approach to disarmament, particularly nuclear weapons. I will return to this issue later on.

For the moment I would like to say how pleased my delegation is to see the distinguished Ambassador and Permanent Representative of our sister nation, Colombia, at the head of this Conference. Your initial words have already shown us the tone and the energy with which you will lead our work. I think this is an opportune moment to remind the delegations that an eminent Colombian, María Emma Mejía, holds the position of Secretary-General of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) in Quito, Ecuador.

In 2009, shortly after UNASUR was created, it established the South American Defence Council, with a view to strengthening South America as a zone of peace. In May 2008, the Manuel Belgrano Centre of Strategic Studies for Defence was opened in Buenos

Aires. These actions show that the countries of South America are determined to better ensure defence on the South American continent and to improve their participation in peace operations within the framework of the United Nations, thereby strengthening trust between UNASUR member States. And all of these countries are part of a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

(spoke in English)

Allow me to say a word of welcome to our new Secretary-General, Mr. Tokayev. As Special Envoy of Kazakhstan, he was in Brazil in 1994. Since then, the relationship between our two countries has made significant progress, much influenced by Mr. Tokayev's action. I am sure that he will have a most beneficial influence on this Conference. I would also like to pay tribute to the remarkable efforts deployed by Ambassador Wang Qun of China during his presidency.

The very first resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly at its seventeenth plenary meeting on 24 January 1946 dealt with disarmament. We all know that, for it is often mentioned in order to highlight the importance of the matter and the sense of priority recognized by Member States since the beginning of the Organization. The title of General Assembly resolution 1 (I) is the following: "Establishment of a Commission to Deal with the Problems Raised by the Discovery of Atomic Energy". The Commission was mandated to make specific proposals, among other purposes, "for the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and of all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction".

The Commission's title, apparently a result of careful negotiations, showed the difficulty of situating in time and fact the origin of the "problems" it was supposed to deal with. The "discovery of atomic energy" was more neutral as a historical landmark than the making, testing or actual use of the bomb.

At that point in time, only one country possessed atomic bombs. That fact explains the reluctance to identify a precise point of departure for the "problems" while not tying them to a single specific country.

Soon, proliferation would start and continue in the following six decades. It is always meaningful that the existence of "problems" and the need for "elimination" of atomic weapons was acknowledged from the beginning of the United Nations.

Since that moment, a number of additional countries have acquired nuclear weapons, each for different reasons but with the underlying common factor of enhancing security and ascertaining power for every one of them.

Given the early awareness of the unacceptability of nuclear weapons, it is always useful to recall that the first possessor of nuclear weapons and the subsequent four proliferators are not more legitimate than others that later followed the same path. There are no legitimate nuclear weapons. Legitimate indeed are the international community's expectations that those States which possess nuclear weapons do live up to their commitments on nuclear disarmament, an objective they have agreed to pursue either on the basis of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) or by means of political declarations and United Nations resolutions, the most important of which is the final document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. In addition, the International Court of Justice has made abundantly clear that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects.

After two thirds of a century, the international community has not reached the goal set by the first General Assembly resolution. What we can do here, as I am trying to do now, is to work to avoid the sad commemoration, not so far away in time, of the first

centenary in the company of nuclear weapons. That aim will not happen in my lifetime, but I would like to spare my children and grandchildren from witnessing that sad commemoration.

We cannot ignore the efforts that have been made in the course of these past decades. The two main possessors have established treaties on the reduction of their arsenals. Important as these may be, they correspond nonetheless to an exercise of bilateral mutual calibration of destructive power. Unilateral reductions have also been carried out, and are always good news. It is, however, not very comfortable to celebrate measures, positive as they may be, that preserve the power of a few nations to destroy the planet.

In a multilateral global format, the main achievement remains the Non-Proliferation Treaty, although its article on nuclear disarmament, besides lacking a minimum of precision in terms of time and other aspects, has not been implemented. In order to improve the perspectives of nuclear disarmament, a strategy of suffocation has been devised with a view to avoiding the recurrence of growth in the arsenals, even enhancing possible reductions.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, not yet in force, is the main example of that strategy. The next step in that same direction would be a treaty concerning fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. Indeed, there is a wide understanding that the conclusion of such a treaty is possible, since the major nuclear-weapon Powers seem well disposed to start its negotiation. This does not mean that the question of fissile material is necessarily the most urgent matter on the disarmament agenda. For Brazil and many other States, legally binding assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States would be a more immediately significant step in the direction of dismantling strategies based on nuclear weapons. I should also recall the constant appeals of the Group of 21 for a treaty banning nuclear weapons, as for other weapons of mass destruction.

The main obstacle in the path of the negotiation of a treaty on fissile material is the determination of its scope. Should it be limited to the prohibition of production of new fissile material, or should it include clauses on material already in existence prior to its entry into force? The first option would simply freeze the current situation. It would lack any dynamism in the direction of real disarmament. It would not add any obligation to non-nuclear-weapon States, such as Brazil, that are already bound by the Non-Proliferation Treaty. For nuclear-weapon States, such a treaty confined to a ban on production would certainly impose limitations on the growth of their stockpiles, but would not necessarily entail any measure of control, not to mention their reduction, still less their elimination.

A really significant treaty would not only have to deal with production; it would also have to include fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices already in existence before its entry into force.

It is usually argued that the mandate contained in document CD/1299 of 1995, known as the Shannon mandate, does not preclude the possibility of a more comprehensive scope for the negotiations. Document CD/1864 of 29 May 2009, containing a programme of work that received unanimous support at that time, limited itself as far the issue of fissile material is concerned to reference to the Shannon mandate.

Since that programme of work could not be implemented, two further attempts were made. Belarus put forward proposals in document CD/WP.599, as did Brazil in document CD/1889. The latter tried to bring more clarity to the consideration of fissile material already in existence at the moment of the entry into force of a treaty.

It has been said that the Shannon mandate does not necessarily exclude the question of stocks. It cannot be denied, however, that the fierce resistance by some member States to

even a broad mention of pre-existing fissile material could be assumed to presage a refusal to address that question in the negotiations.

A mandate cannot be a blueprint for a treaty, but it should provide an idea of the playing field. In that respect, as clear as possible a picture of the intended scope would seem necessary for some States to embark on negotiations. There is no doubt that the treaty would have to contain definitions and establish a verification system, among other matters. But since the scope of the treaty cannot be established with such certitude, some indication should be contained in the mandate.

It is a different matter to block any decision on the opening of negotiations on the basis of perceptions of security, especially when there is overwhelming support for negotiations on the part of non-nuclear-weapon States, in particular if the objection comes from a State possessing nuclear weapons. This is tantamount to opposing any negotiations on any disarmament issue. A member State that freely joined the Conference on Disarmament, the purpose of which is to negotiate legal instruments on disarmament and arms control, cannot invoke its security situation in order to prevent a negotiation that is deemed appropriate by a great majority of member States, if not by all. I would like to insist on this point. Every State has the duty to provide security for its citizens. However, this security cannot be based on weapons of mass destruction.

It is high time to understand that concerns over national security are not the exclusive interest of nuclear-weapon States. This would imply that nuclear weapons are necessary for the security of a State. In fact there are States besides those that possess nuclear weapons which objectively accept that position, placing themselves under the protection of the nuclear arsenals of other States.

To sum up: negotiations on a treaty on fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices should start promptly on the basis of a mandate with a minimum of clarity concerning the scope of the envisaged instrument.

The work to be undertaken by the Conference on Disarmament for a treaty on fissile material is first and foremost of a political nature. It will obviously require a great amount of technical expertise. But let us not presume that problems will be solved in technical meetings. In this sense, a negotiation on fissile material is similar to many processes in other areas where the technical component is essential to support political decisions. This is not an unusual situation for diplomats.

Questions concerning definitions and verification, among others, are essentially complex and admit diverse solutions. Allow me to recall that a political diplomatic negotiation is not a scientific experiment, and our assertions, although preferably technically sound and based on solid logic, derive first and foremost from the interests and aims of the States that we represent.

As evidence that a mandate for a negotiation can be both encompassing and flexible, last year Brazil proposed document CD/1888, containing an outline structure for drafting a treaty on fissile material. This initiative is evidence of the commitment and openness of Brazil to this endeavour.

If we succeed in starting to negotiate a really comprehensive instrument on fissile material, we will truly be making important and concrete progress in the direction of disarmament. It will not be a mere confidence-building measure or political initiative. The essential condition for that is that the negotiation should encompass the matter in its entirety. It is also indispensable to include all nuclear weapons possessors in the negotiation. However, we may admit that the result should not be a *non plus ultra*, completely closed to future evolution.

The proper venue is this Conference on Disarmament, which has a negotiating mandate. A parallel expeditious process cannot ensure the participation of all States necessary for an instrument on nuclear disarmament. For us, a political gesture showing goodwill by like-minded countries is not sufficient. This cannot be an exercise of what has been called aristocratic multilateralism.

A long, complex negotiation will require an institutional structure, the assistance of a technical and necessarily impartial secretariat and dedicated delegations, among other needs. Such a negotiation cannot be assured by a group of well-intended, like-minded people meeting on the margins of the General Assembly or other organs, unless the real intention is to conduct a make-believe negotiation devoid of substantive content.

As I mentioned before, you are assuming the direction of this forum at a particularly relevant moment.

By the end of July, the United Nations General Assembly will hold a meeting on the Conference on Disarmament. There will be a debate and one cannot exclude, I suppose, the adoption of one or more resolutions.

Since the high-level meeting held in New York last September, we have heard many interventions on the state of the Conference on Disarmament and its future. It is not easy to extrapolate a clear trend of opinion from these. There is some oscillation between clear support for continuing to make efforts in this forum and to seek a different institutional path. On that side of the spectrum, the convening of a fourth special session of the General Assembly has been defended by many. Others seem to prefer ad hoc spontaneous and nebulous solutions.

It is not my intention to enter now into that debate. However, it is important to be clear that our goal must remain true disarmament and a world free of nuclear weapons. That goal cannot fall from heaven; it will be reached by means of comprehensive treaties negotiated in a truly multilateral fashion on solid institutional ground.

Just a few days after the General Assembly meeting, a meeting of the five nuclear-weapon States envisaged in the NPT is scheduled to happen. It is to be hoped that the General Assembly will send a strong message to those five States in order to help that meeting to reach meaningful results including on their compliance with the NPT.

Before those upcoming events, during the Colombian presidency, it is important for the Conference on Disarmament to discuss their possible and desirable outcomes. These discussions and the pending adoption of a programme of work should occupy our attention during the forthcoming weeks under your able guidance.

We do not need to increase the disillusion of world public opinion and the disengagement of young people, of which a clear indication is the present low interest of civil society in nuclear disarmament, as compared with the ample movements in previous decades, and the attention paid to other matters such as climate change or financial regulations. We cannot afford to damage the political structure created to channel the political process of disarmament. If we are not content with its performance, we should remind ourselves that it is incumbent upon us to strive to reach results.

To build is always more difficult than to destroy.

Mr. Manfredi (Italy): Madam President, as this is the first time I take the floor under your presidency, I wish to extend to you my delegation's warmest congratulations and pledge to support you in your task to the fullest possible extent.

As you know, in accordance with the decisions of the Conference on Disarmament as contained in document CD/1907, I chaired as coordinator two informal sessions that took place on 17 and 18 May 2011 on items 1 and 2 of the agenda, with a general focus on a

fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). With your permission, and pursuant to document CD/1907, today I wish to give an oral report under my own responsibility on the outcome of these informal discussions.

In the light of the preceding discussions on the topic of FMCT and in order to avoid repetitions and to ensure the greatest degree of factuality and usefulness of the debate, the discussions were focused on two specific aspects of FMCT, to wit, its structure and definitions.

In order to facilitate the debate and to allow delegations to better prepare their statements, I wrote to all delegations on 13 May 2011, putting forth some suggestions as to how the two sessions could be conducted and listing the principal Conference documents that could serve as background material.

I stressed, however, that the rules of procedure gave delegations the right to deal with any relevant topic. In the event, the meeting of 17 May was mainly devoted to the question of the structure of an FMCT, while the one on 18 May was focused on definitions. Several delegations also gave general statements on the aims and role of such a treaty within the broader context of nuclear disarmament.

The presence of experts from capitals added value to the work and allowed the two meetings to examine in greater detail certain specific legal and technical aspects of a treaty.

Numerous references were made during both sessions to the Shannon report and the Shannon mandate, document CD/1299 of 24 March 1995, the continued validity of which was not called into question. The principles that an FMCT should be non-discriminatory, multilateral and effectively and internationally verifiable, in particular, were reaffirmed.

In discussing the structure of a fissile material cut-off treaty, various possible solutions were examined and their respective advantages and disadvantages identified. In general, international treaties may be divided into two main categories, namely, treaties with a single text (such as the Chemical Weapons Convention), and treaties with a main text accompanied by attached protocols, annexes or addenda. In the latter type of treaty, the main text and its attachments may be negotiated in parallel and have a single entry-into-force mechanism (as in the case of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty), or the main text and its attachments may be negotiated separately and contain different entry-into-force provisions (as in the case of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons).

Frequent reference was also made to a Brazilian proposal, in document CD/1888 of 14 June 2010, that suggested a framework treaty containing scope, definitions and final clauses, accompanied by two protocols. One of the protocols would concern the ban on the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons and the other the rules on existing fissile materials. Both protocols would also contain the relevant appropriate verification provisions. A structure of this kind allows the adoption of a gradual approach by facilitating negotiations on the less controversial elements, with a view to progress in later stages to the more difficult ones. A solution of this sort, however, may also present two potential problems. In the first place, by postponing negotiations on the more controversial issues one risks being confronted later by an insurmountable deadlock on one or both protocols. The other drawback of this approach is that it may produce an excessively weak FMCT, especially if accession to both protocols is not mandatory.

An FMCT modelled on the Biological Weapons Convention or on the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons was deemed unsuitable by most delegations. It would be lacking provisions (the Biological Weapons Convention model), or — in the case of a Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons solution, which is a framework treaty with additional protocols negotiated subsequently — it would be liable to produce a toothless final product if no agreement was reached on all the protocols.

The NPT solution was also considered, consisting of a concise main text with a system of verifications subsequently agreed upon based on International Atomic Energy Agency comprehensive safeguards and additional protocols. Many delegations, however, warned that reaching an understanding on verifications and implementation at a later date would not be certain, and that failure to do so would harm the treaty's credibility and effectiveness.

The Chemical Weapons Convention model (a very detailed text containing also the necessary annexes on materials, verifications and other technical questions) was considered to have the advantage of entry into force in its entirety, but the disadvantage of foreseeable lengthy and complicated negotiations.

No objections were made during the discussions to the proposal that an FMCT should have no expiry date.

Considerable attention was devoted during the debate to entry-into-force provisions that were considered key elements to the treaty's effectiveness. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty precedent was nevertheless considered flawed by most. Many delegations believed that a new solution was necessary, one that could involve all nuclear-weapon States and States possessing nuclear weapons from the start of negotiations, avoiding, however, the adoption of clauses that would allow one country or a small minority of countries to block the entry into force of a treaty. Others believed, instead, that the mere presence of the P5 was sufficient to commence negotiations.

In discussing definitions, the scope of an FMCT emerged as one of its principal and defining factors. The main purpose of a treaty, as was made clear by all delegations, is to ban the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons, while safeguarding the right to use such materials for peaceful purposes. Consequently, definitions should take this requirement into account. Some delegations pointed out that definitions should not be excessively limited and so rigid as to be unable to take into account technological development. Neither, however, should they be so wide as to include materials whose use for non-peaceful purposes is largely improbable, but whose inclusion in the treaty would increase the relevant verification costs to an unacceptable degree. Delegations also considered it desirable for a treaty to contain provisions to simplify the modification of definitions in line with technological advancement.

In the discussions on the topic of definitions some delegations called for a careful study of the need to include transuranic elements, such as americium and neptunium, that seem to an increasing degree to be suitable for weaponization.

Within the scope of the clauses on definitions, several delegations pointed out that provision must also be made for the permitted uses of fissile materials in order to avoid interference from FMCT with the inalienable right of countries to exploit nuclear resources for both peaceful ends and military uses, such as nuclear propulsion, that are not directly linked with the manufacture of warheads and other weapons.

Given that the primary purpose of an FMCT will be to ban the production of fissile materials for the manufacture of nuclear weapons, negotiations on a treaty, as most delegations pointed out, will inevitably also touch upon fissile materials already in existence prior to its entry into force. During the two days of informal discussions, it was clear that the question of existing stocks of fissile materials remains the most controversial issue to be negotiated.

The debate brought to the fore the widely held opinion that the implementation of verification mechanisms, and possibly even their definition, could be entrusted to IAEA, with the understanding that the Agency's human and financial resources would have to be appropriately strengthened. Several delegations also underlined the need for verifications to

be aimed also at fissile material manufacturing plants. In a more general sense, careful attention should be devoted to the effectiveness of the verification provisions in order to avoid undermining the credibility of the whole FMCT. To this end, and also with the aim of assessing a treaty's overall feasibility, the effectiveness of verification must include a cost-benefit analysis of the whole system.

Taking into account the above-mentioned requirements, most delegations were of the opinion that definitions and verifications should be inspired as much as possible either by article XX of the Statute of the International Atomic Energy Agency, or the principles of "direct use" contained therein, as well as its comprehensive safeguards system. Adjustments would have to be made to take into account the specificities of such a treaty.

The two informal sessions of the Conference on Disarmament devoted to FMCT, of course, had no negotiating mandate and neither were any hard and fast conclusions expected of them. However, from the trends of the discussions, indications on delegations' preferences on the various issues seemed to stand out that in the future may be useful in facilitating negotiations.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Ambassador of Italy for his words. I think we should all take the opportunity to reflect on what he said in his statement about all the meetings that have been held, all the meetings that show that we are not capable of moving forward and reaching an agreement on such sensitive issues in today's world. I believe that this has been a very important exercise, although our exercise today is to focus more on resolving the deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Pakistan, Zamir Akram.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): At the outset, Madam President, let me congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. We look forward to a productive and fruitful session under your guidance. I assure you of my delegation's fullest support and cooperation with you in the discharge of your responsibilities. Let me also take this opportunity at the outset to express my deep admiration and appreciation for the brilliant statement once again made by our esteemed colleague, the Ambassador of Brazil. There are obviously some points in his statement with which we do not fully agree, but I hope that the statement that I am about to make now will address, or at least provide some insight into, our view on the issues that he has raised.

Madam President, in your opening statement this morning, you emphasized the need for us to focus on the evolution or working out of a programme of work and to provide concrete proposals towards this end. I hope that the statement we are about to make will do exactly that. However, the purpose of taking the floor by my delegation this morning is to comment on a recent article written by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, entitled "Dysfunctional disarmament". We feel that this is a timely article that reflects the priority that the Secretary-General accords to the Conference and its agenda as well as his own personal involvement in this important issue.

We fully concur with the acknowledgment by the Secretary-General that "the Conference on Disarmament has failed to make any substantive progress for 15 years". This truth seems to escape some delegations that seek to create an impression that the Conference has not been able to undertake negotiations for the past two years only. It is surprising, to say the least, that those countries that are today most vociferous in condemning the present stalemate were either themselves responsible for this stalemate or were notably silent during the past decade and have only now found their voice to term this impasse unacceptable.

The Secretary-General also highlighted the status of the Conference as the sole multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament and advised us all that the Conference should not act in the mode of business as usual but work to overcome its paralysis.

It is indeed a great pity that the Conference has not been able to fulfil the vision that led to its creation at the United Nations first special session on disarmament. Indeed, with regard to its very *raison d'être*, namely, nuclear disarmament, the Conference has been totally paralysed since its inception 32 years ago.

It is, therefore, time for us to face the facts and recognize the reasons for which the Conference on Disarmament has become “dysfunctional”, in the words of the Secretary-General.

In this regard, I would like to highlight the following critical facts.

First, the Conference does not function in a vacuum. Its work and output depend on prevailing political realities.

Second, progress in Conference negotiations depends upon meeting or addressing the security concerns of all members of the Conference. No treaty can be negotiated here if it is contrary to the security interest of any member State. It is to ensure this point that the rule of consensus was introduced in the rules of procedure of the Conference.

Third, as such it would be wrong to attribute the lack of progress in the Conference to its rules of procedure, particularly the consensus rule. The Conference has successfully negotiated landmark instruments such as the Chemical Weapons Convention and Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty with the same rules of procedure. On the other hand, today, since all members are not ready, there is a lack of progress on nuclear disarmament, negative security assurances, prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS) and FMCT. Therefore, the impediment to progress in the Conference on Disarmament has nothing to do with its rules of procedure.

Fourth, the history of the Conference clearly demonstrates a regular pattern of negotiating only those agreements that do not undermine or compromise the security interests of States, especially the major Powers. The Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention were negotiated only after possession of vast numbers of nuclear weapons made biological and chemical weapon systems superfluous and redundant for the major Powers. Similarly, the major Powers were ready to conclude the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty only after they had carried out a sufficient number of nuclear tests and further testing became unnecessary for them. The same is the case with FMCT. Now, after having developed huge stockpiles of nuclear weapons as well as stocks of fissile material, especially highly enriched uranium and weapons-grade plutonium, which can be quickly converted into nuclear warheads, these major Powers are ready to conclude a treaty that will only ban the future production of fissile material, since they no longer need more of it. This approach is indeed “cost-free” for them, as it will not undermine or compromise their security. For this reason an FMCT would be cost-free for the major Powers, just as in the case of the Biological Weapons Convention, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

Over the past two years, Pakistan has clearly stated the reasons why it cannot agree to negotiations on an FMCT in the Conference. These reasons bear repetition today. It is due to the discriminatory policies on nuclear cooperation pursued by some major Powers that are accentuating the asymmetry in fissile material stockpiles in our region, to the detriment of Pakistani security interests. It is important to underscore that Pakistan did not create this situation. Let me repeat this: it is important to underscore that Pakistan did not create this situation. We have been compelled to take this position due to the selective and discriminatory action of certain States in violation of their own national and international commitments, in pursuit of profit and dubious cold war concepts of containment and balance of power.

As a result, the international non-proliferation regime has been sacrificed on the altar of power and profit. That members of the Nuclear Suppliers Group surrendered their right to oppose this move only makes a mockery of the NPT, the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Nuclear Suppliers Group itself. So let us not pretend and be sanctimonious about protecting the Conference and promoting disarmament.

This august body will recall that, on 28 February 2011, the representative of a major Power stated that it was ready to try to “accommodate legitimate national interests” of States. So far, no such effort has been made to address our concerns. Contrary to these encouraging words, what we have witnessed is a concerted campaign through a patently pliable and biased Western media to present exaggerated claims about the strategic capacity and capability of Pakistan, which are totally unrealistic and unfounded.

We are also aware that some Powers have been speculating about the use of so-called “pressure” on Pakistan to compel us to agree to FMCT negotiations. With all due humility, I would refer them to the results of sanctions on Pakistan before and after the nuclear tests of 1998. The lesson is simple: no price is too great for ensuring our security.

Pakistan has been forthright in articulating its concerns with clarity and honesty. We have nothing to hide on this count. The Government of Pakistan has clearly stated at the highest levels that it would not allow its credible deterrence capability to be compromised. One country cannot be expected to compromise on its fundamental security interests for an instrument that is cost-free for all other countries.

In order to make progress in the work of the Conference, we need to separate fact from fiction. We need to recognize the realities and work towards building consensus in the Conference by taking into account the legitimate security interests of all States. From Pakistan’s perspective, this requires negotiating a treaty on fissile materials that not only bans future production but involves the reduction of fissile material stockpiles. Only when the issue of asymmetry in stockpiles is addressed through reductions can there be a level playing field. We are therefore in favour of a fissile material treaty rather than a fissile material cut-off treaty, which will be a genuine disarmament instrument and not just a quasi-non-proliferation measure.

Pakistan also remains ready to negotiate treaties on the other core issues on the agenda of the Conference, namely, nuclear disarmament, negative security assurances and PAROS.

Indeed, we strongly believe that negative security assurances are particularly ripe for negotiations, since the conclusion of such an instrument would not compromise the strategic interests of any country. In reality, no nuclear-weapon State would consider using nuclear weapons against any non-nuclear-weapon State. Even the threat of doing so is morally reprehensible.

While considering the Secretary-General’s recent article, the Conference should also recall the seminal contribution made by the Secretary-General in his statement of October 2008, entitled “The United Nations and security in a nuclear-weapon-free world”. In this statement, the Secretary-General outlined a five-point proposal for a road map towards nuclear disarmament. The first step suggested by the Secretary-General called upon all States, in particular nuclear-weapon States, to fulfil their obligations under the NPT to undertake negotiations on effective measures leading to nuclear disarmament. As to the process by which this could be achieved, the Secretary-General suggested that the nuclear Powers should engage actively with other States on this issue at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, which he recognized as the world’s single multilateral negotiating forum.

The second step identified by the Secretary-General is to call upon the Security Council's permanent members to unambiguously assure non-nuclear-weapon States that they will not be subjected to the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

However, what we are witnessing here in the Conference on Disarmament is an attempt at cherry-picking from the road map identified by the Secretary-General. This kind of à la carte approach to disarmament may be desirable for some countries but remains unacceptable for others.

The Secretary-General in his article also reminded us that membership of the Conference on Disarmament is a privilege. Clearly, this privilege requires responsibility and, as the Secretary-General pointed out in his October 2008 statement, the nuclear-weapon States need to fulfil their obligations to undertake negotiations on effective measures leading to nuclear disarmament in the Conference. Unfortunately, however, the record shows that some of the major nuclear-weapon States, despite their moralistic rhetoric, have consistently opposed negotiations on nuclear disarmament as well as on negative security assurances in the Conference. This indeed makes a mockery of both their privilege and responsibility.

Before concluding, I would like to sound a note of caution in the context of proposals being made by some of our colleagues that would undermine the efficacy and the centrality of the Conference as the world's sole multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament.

Let me make it absolutely clear that Pakistan will not be a party to any FMCT negotiations outside the Conference on Disarmament, and we believe that, even in the unlikely event that such negotiations produce a result, that outcome will be stillborn and we shall not be bound by it.

Secondly, in our view the idea that funding for the Conference should be curtailed or reduced seems drastic and impracticable. By this logic, several multilateral organizations which are confronted by stalemate would need to close down as well. Should we apply this principle, for instance, to the World Trade Organization or indeed even to the United Nations Security Council, which has been unable to implement its decisions on key global issues for several decades?

Mr. Montalvo (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Firstly, we would like to express our gratitude to the Ambassador of China and his delegation for the efforts they made in carrying the presidency of this Conference forward. This was not an easy task, given the deadlock which has affected the body for a long time now.

At the same time, we would like to extend a warm welcome to you, Ambassador Arango, as you take the Chair today and face similar challenges. We are delighted to have a woman and a colleague from the Latin American and Caribbean Group to guide our work. We offer you our most sincere congratulations and the full cooperation of the Ecuadorian delegation, and our short intervention this morning is mainly to show our support for your work proposal and methodology. In doing so, allow me to remind you of Ecuador's opening statement when it took the Chair of the Conference on Disarmament in 2001.

Ten years ago, from the same position that you occupy now, our country expressed hopes for an end to the deadlock which had affected the Conference since 1998. We could not have imagined for a minute that it would continue for many more years. At the time, we reminded you that Ecuador had joined this multilateral body in order to participate in the negotiations on total and complete disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. We had waited 16 long years as an observer country to achieve our goal of becoming a part of this noble forum. Like all new members, we had hopes, illusions and blind faith in its

objectives. Thirteen years later, we are still waiting, and like many of the countries here today, we feel disappointed.

We had waited for so long and with such enthusiasm to become members of this body, which, once we joined, lapsed into a state of deadlock and inactivity. In a way, we have become powerless accomplices in a negative, discouraging and unconstructive situation which, as the Ambassador of Brazil reminded us a moment ago, has even made some question the very existence of the Conference itself. A negative situation which is currently prevailing over the noblest interests of humankind and the preservation of peace and peaceful coexistence in all its forms.

However, the most regrettable and the saddest point for our delegation is that since we became members of this Conference, we have not once seen a single negotiation within the forum. And as Ambassador Macedo also said, it is more difficult to build than to destroy.

As in the time of the Roman Senate, we have heard some very good statements, and this forum has witnessed excellent speakers, and we have been able to see people with many inspiring and innovative ideas and proposals. However, the difference between the Conference and the Roman Senate is that the members of the Senate applied common sense and sound judgement when taking on challenges, assuming their responsibilities and adopting decisions. They never depended on the rules of procedure or were affected by language problems, as you mentioned in your opening speech, Madam President. And being what they are, these rules for facilitating work cannot in themselves represent issues of essence and substance, to the point of undermining the true nature and *raison d'être* of the Conference, and therefore, as the Ambassador of Pakistan rightly pointed out a few minutes ago, it is wrong to blame the lack of progress in this Conference on the rules of procedure, which have been used as a mere excuse. The true reasons behind this problem lie elsewhere.

And hence, as members, we somehow feel that we are misrepresenting the mandate of our peoples and societies, who, if they were able to attend and participate in these meetings, would certainly be incredulous and bewildered to see the paralysis which is afflicting us, the *status quo* or deadlock which you emphasized, Madam President, and which is becoming more and more unsustainable and unjustifiable day by day. And perhaps it is for that very reason that we do not allow them to be a part of this body, although strangely enough, they are encouraged to participate actively in other multilateral forums.

However, Madam President, as hope springs eternal and as we still have the idealistic outlook of a new member, we hope that you will be successful in your task, that the Conference on Disarmament will mark the beginning of your term with substantive work and that a substantive programme of work will be adopted as an efficient mechanism for peace and security, as you stressed in your speech. As I said at the start, you have the full support of our delegation and our backing in your efforts to encourage an inclusive dialogue and in the significant and mature proposals you mentioned, as well as in the methodology to be followed and the role of the Chair, and we are very pleased to accept your invitation, as we believe that the Conference on Disarmament should be strengthened, revitalized and committed to its true goals and *raison d'être*, and could include the civil society duly represented in this room and the observer countries, no longer as they are but as full members, with all the privileges and responsibilities that were mentioned a few minutes ago.

Mr. Wang Qun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Madam President, the Chinese delegation would like to congratulate you on assuming the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. We hope that under your leadership the Conference can make progress. Right now, it is at a critical juncture. It is encouraging that it has been gaining momentum

since the start of this year; all parties have expressed the political will to break the deadlock as soon as possible and have made tireless efforts to that end. China has noted that, during your term as President, you intend to continue guiding delegations in unremitting efforts to adopt a programme of work and to begin substantive work within the Conference, and for that we are deeply appreciative.

China during its recent presidency put forward a number of views on the programme of work which we will not repeat here. We believe that, as long as all member States work together, continue to build confidence, strengthen mutual political trust, use political wisdom and adopt the right way of thinking and working, the Conference can make progress.

China is ready to collaborate actively with you in your work and to maintain close cooperation with other colleagues in a common effort to promote the work of the Conference.

Mr. Jazaïry (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): Madam President, I wish at the outset to express our profound gratitude to the Ambassador of China for the tremendous efforts that he made during his presidency of our Conference. Furthermore, I would like to express to you our overwhelming happiness when we see you assuming the responsibilities of managing our work. You are the first woman to serve as President this year, and perhaps this is auspicious for us. I recall in this regard the valuable statement made by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom to the Conference at its meeting on 8 March 2011, which sent a strong message of support for us; the League must have a good opinion of us. Be assured, Madam President, of my delegation's support. We call on the different delegations to rally around you and extend the assistance that you require.

I asked to take the floor today to speak about the issue of the programme of work, in the light of what you proposed to us. The Conference today is at a crossroads that I would say is surrounded by fog, and the current deadlock is a cause for real concern.

It is hard for international community to understand why we have been running on the spot for 15 years, when the challenges facing the Conference are growing more serious on a daily basis. The situation of the Conference is unique; other United Nations disarmament mechanisms do not face the same obstacles. Concern has focused on the Conference because of its importance with regard to the international community. If we want the Conference to remain the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, then logically we must intensify our efforts and give it the opportunity to preserve its pivotal role. That is why it is important to reach consensus on a draft programme of work that enables the Conference to carry out its mandate. Of course, the desired programme of work is not an end in itself but is merely an instrument of consensus that will allow us to begin work on the conclusion of international instruments that embody the principle of undiminished collective security for all States.

The work of the Conference revolves around political issues that are highly sensitive because they relate to the security of States; the lack of consensus in views with which we are familiar is basically due to the lack of consensus on the order of priorities in the context of security strategies and balances at the regional and international levels. Whenever a State or group of States feels that any programme of work or any negotiations will be at the expense of its security, we should not expect that it will act against its interests. The fundamental duty of any State is to protect the security of its people, as the Ambassador of Pakistan said. However, as the Ambassador of Brazil indicated, this security should not focus on retaining weapons of mass destruction or, to be more precise, weapons that would entirely obliterate humanity. In this context, the credibility of any programme of work, as with any other mechanism, depends upon the confidence that it gives to all that it addresses their security concerns. The security of some cannot be built on a foundation that does not

take the security of others into consideration. Hence the importance of the need to reach a comprehensive, balanced programme of work that can reconcile different priorities and embody the concept of collective security.

Algeria is committed to the Conference on Disarmament and has always been keen for it to carry out its functions. It has put forward numerous ideas and proposals, most recently decision CD/1864 on the programme of work, which was adopted by consensus in 2009; we still believe that this decision represents an excellent basis from which to start work. Of course, this document is not sufficient to respond to the desires of all, including the aspirations of my own country, but it is a starting point on a long path that we hope will lead in the end to negotiations on all fundamental issues.

One of the fundamental points often missed by some is that this document and the priorities of the working groups that it establishes are subject to elaboration and amendment, as provided for in the preamble to the decision. Unfortunately, however, it appears that some have retained only that there is a mandate to negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile material and appear to have forgotten the other elements of the decision; this does not contribute to creating the climate of trust required in the Conference. In the light of the discussions during the Canadian and Chilean presidencies, some have proposed a simplified approach to the programme of work, or the establishment of discussion mechanisms in order to lay the technical foundations for subsequent negotiations.

This may be useful, in that it would make it possible for substantive discussions to start and give the impression that the Conference is in fact working. All negotiations on disarmament instruments have always been preceded by in-depth, extensive discussions. There is nothing in the rules of procedure to prevent us from adopting a simplified programme based on a timetable for discussions, without necessarily establishing ad hoc committees; this will enable us to start work. However, in the absence of political will this does not give a guarantee that we will start negotiating. It is the absence of political will which is preventing us from progressing with our work, and we do not believe that recourse to alternative negotiating frameworks will solve the problem; on the contrary, it could complicate matters or mean that instruments concluded outside the Conference would be concluded without the participation of all States concerned, which would consequently render them less effective.

Mr. Gómez Camacho (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to express my warm thanks to Ambassador Wang for his work and efforts in the Chair of the Conference on Disarmament, which Mexico greatly appreciates. Madam President, naturally for you too the warmest greetings and welcome from Mexico. It is a huge pleasure to see not only a woman, not only a Latin American, but a Colombian in the Chair of the Conference on Disarmament. We are very delighted also because what I would call your talent, sensitivity, skill and, if I may add, political astuteness are very well known in Geneva and in the other international organizations, and we are sure that these characteristic qualities of yours will help us to make progress in the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

Mexico's position is very well known, and I am not going to describe it at length. However, I would like to make three very specific points. Number one, from Mexico's viewpoint, it is very difficult to rationalize 15 years of deadlock in this body. We can try to justify them, we can seek all kinds of arguments, we can even attribute a degree of rationality to the situation, but at the end of the day this effort comes up against a raw, clear, sad reality: 15 years of inactivity. Mexico cannot find a way of looking at it or justifying it in a positive manner. As we have consistently said, our commitment is to nuclear disarmament, and to that extent our commitment is to the Conference on Disarmament. To the extent that it was an effective vehicle which achieved great things, our commitment and our work was here. Today we have serious doubts about whether this

body is ready to follow up this supreme function. I repeat: we cannot see how we can rationalize 15 years of deadlock.

Secondly, it is often said in the Conference on Disarmament that the problem of the deadlock in this body is not the body itself, but the overall political environment, which is complex and prevents us in this body from moving forward with agreements. And Mexico has consistently recognized that it is true that the overall environment is complex, but it wholly disagrees with the idea that it is the environment and not this body. In our opinion the global environment is indeed complex, and in every field. The difference lies in the fact that there are mechanisms which facilitate agreements and there are mechanisms and institutions which inhibit agreements. And in our opinion, the Conference on Disarmament has become one of those which inhibit negotiations and inhibit agreements, and inhibits them, among other reasons, because, as we have also said, consistently, its philosophy, its mentality and — I am sorry to disagree with some of my colleagues — the rules of procedure are also responsible for this inhibiting effect in this body. Either we reform the Conference on Disarmament and equip it to negotiate and achieve its objectives, or Mexico, as we have also said, is perfectly ready to go elsewhere to do so. Our commitment is to disarmament.

And thirdly, it is also said from time to time in this Conference on Disarmament that there is no sense in negotiating on something when the key players are not participating. And here too Mexico could not disagree more: first because in the world of disarmament we do not think there are key players and non-key players; all of us are equally affected by the existence of nuclear weapons in particular. And second, because if we were to follow this reasoning, not only would international law not exist, but I have the impression that we would never have embarked on negotiating the NPT.

So, Madam President, with these remarks I repeat Mexico's commitment to you. I reiterate our unlimited support for your leadership and your ideas, and we convey to you every best wish during this month in which you` will be chairing this body.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much. I truly thank you very much for your words. They give me great encouragement to pursue this important and by no means easy task, in which, as I said in the statement, I will try to be as responsible, transparent and inclusive as possible on all the topics we will be dealing with during this month. I give the floor to the Ambassador of the United States, Ambassador Laura Kennedy.

Ms. Kennedy (United States of America): Madam President, it is indeed a pleasure to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency. I join previous speakers in saying that I admire all the talents that you bring to this task, and of course expressing our desire to do everything possible to support you.

We particularly welcome the opportunity for all of us to reflect on our work and the future of the Conference on Disarmament under your leadership; as a number of speakers have said, we are indeed at a critical juncture.

Several other speakers have also made reference to our so far elusive efforts to regain the consensus on a programme of work that was reached, however briefly, with CD/1864 under the capable efforts of Ambassador Jazaïry.

Certainly, my Government would enthusiastically endorse any POW — meaning programme of work, not prisoner of war — although sometimes I feel like that, sitting here after a year in this distinguished chamber.

Anyhow, I mean a programme of work along the lines of CD/1864, which would incorporate a negotiation on an FMCT, along the lines of the Shannon mandate, a goal I

might reiterate that has been repeatedly endorsed over the years by representatives here and in other international forums.

Now, since I was absent from the last plenary held under the Chinese presidency, let me take this opportunity to commend the dedication and energy displayed by Ambassador Wang Qun.

Madam President, we will enthusiastically support your efforts as President on behalf of all of us.

Finally, let me offer my personal welcome to our new Secretary-General, since again, I was unable to be present at his debut. I certainly look forward to handing over the warm, congratulatory letter from my Secretary of State to Mr. Tokayev which I have not yet had an opportunity to do; so let me just say now that I join countless other American colleagues in expressing admiration for the many, many contributions made during his extraordinary and distinguished career. Let me just say that we are indeed fortunate to have such an experienced and talented statesman at our helm, and we very much look forward to working with him in his new capacity.

Mr. Daryaei (Islamic Republic of Iran): Madam President, first of all I would like to congratulate you on the assumption of the presidency of the Conference. We expect a fruitful meeting under your guidance. I take this opportunity to assure you of the full cooperation of my delegation.

The first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament established the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament. We attach great importance to the Conference on Disarmament based on the mandate that it derives from the first special session.

It is clear that the mandate is the negotiation of legally binding instruments in the field of disarmament, with due respect for its rules of procedure.

Based on these rules of procedure, the adoption of a programme of work is indeed the main task given to the Conference in order to start its formal negotiation work. In this context, the main question is what the top priority for starting negotiation is.

From all points of view, the top priority is nuclear disarmament. Bearing in mind the urgency of eliminating the threat posed by nuclear weapons to international security, we call on all members of the Conference to adopt and implement a balanced and comprehensive programme of work on the basis of its agenda, dealing with the core issue in accordance with the rules of procedure.

My delegation has always insisted on equilibrium and balance and on the need to take decisions by consensus in the Conference. The rules of procedure of the Conference are the guiding instrument that should be fully respected. In our view, a comprehensive and balanced programme of work to enable the Conference to start negotiation on the four core issues can best serve the purpose of the Conference, as well as the safety and security of the whole international community. In that regard, nuclear disarmament remains the highest priority for my delegation as it remains the same for most members of the Conference.

The substantive discussion in the last plenary and informal meetings showed that nuclear disarmament is the top priority of the great majority of the world's different regions.

The Conference should agree on establishing an ad hoc committee to start negotiation on nuclear disarmament as soon as possible. A nuclear weapons convention for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons is a ripe topic for negotiation in the Conference, since the major root cause of security problems in the world is the mere

existence of nuclear weapons. The programme of work should provide a negotiating mandate on this issue.

The total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Pending that time, a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument and security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States should be pursued as a matter of priority through the establishment of an ad hoc negotiating committee in the Conference.

We also believe that negative security assurances are a ripe issue for negotiation, since the issue would not encounter technical difficulties and relates only to the political will of nuclear-weapon States.

We support also the start of negotiation by the Conference on the conclusion of a legally binding treaty to fully ban the possibility of a war in outer space and to prevent the weaponization of outer space, as such a legally binding instrument would increase the security of all nations and provide the necessary requirements for the peaceful use of space.

Concerning a fissile material treaty (FMT), we said with no ambiguity that the issue of stockpiles and verification should be covered under the possible treaty. An FMT should be a clear and meaningful step for disarmament and non-proliferation in all its aspects, as production and existing stocks as well as the future production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other explosive devices must be covered under the scope of a treaty. Any negotiation on an FMT that does not include stocks or the key players would have no content and would consequently be fruitless. We have to be clear in our programme of work on this important subject.

Mr. Reyes Rodriguez (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Alicia. I was really hesitating to take the floor, but I do not want to fail to join in acknowledging the trust we have in your ability to guide our work as President of the Conference on Disarmament. I must say that we placed this same trust and support in each of the Presidents who were in office during the year – first Marius, of Canada, then Pedro from Chile, and finally, before Alicia, Wang of China. For Cuba it was clear that what we face is not a problem of leadership, nor even a problem which is in our hands. We are diplomats, we work on the basis of instructions, but we live in a real world, where actual events overwhelm us. We can hold numerous sterile discussions and really come to the same conclusions.

Cuba's position on disarmament is clear, paralleling the position of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the G21 and all those who consider that the real subject of discussion in the field of disarmament, in order to achieve general and complete disarmament, is the elimination of nuclear weapons. And, if anyone had any doubts, following the succession of accidents in civilian installations in Chernobyl, as a result of human error, and in Japan as a result of a natural disaster, it is clear that even leaving aside the use of force involving nuclear weapons, no one in this world is able to guarantee that a nuclear accident would not occur and run out of control. Hence, even above and beyond negative assurances, the very existence of nuclear weapons is really a standing danger for each one of us.

The issue of peace is complicated. This is one of the few bodies in the entire multilateral system where decisions are really taken which affect all parties, whose implementation requires respect for and commitment by all parties, because only by means of trust and the guarantees that others will give up their weapons will we ourselves be in a position to give up ours. There are other forums which are undoubtedly also important, such as the International Monetary Fund, except that there the most influential countries impose their views. I believe that here, on occasion, they try to do so, except that this is really a democratic forum where the developing countries, the small countries, demand consensus and demand respect in order to guarantee what many of those present here, who

deploy such rhetoric in favour of disarmament and particularly non-proliferation, vote against in the Human Rights Council, namely the right of peoples to peace.

Cuba is objective in its analysis. Let us not dramatize what is happening here. What is happening here in the Conference on Disarmament is a reflection of what is happening in the world, the new equilibria which are becoming established and the moment of change which is occurring among mankind. Yes, a few steps forward have been taken in the field of non-proliferation, and basically the consolidation of the hegemony and superiority of a group of countries which have seized that right, but what is true is that really not only has there been no progress at all in 15 years, there has been no progress at all since the Second World War in the field of the most important aspects of general disarmament, in particular the issue of nuclear weapons.

I believe that we are not in a position to force the issue. Really, anyone trying to do so would be foolish – although basically he could achieve it. As has been said here, there could indeed be an instrument outside a multilateral system, but would not those ratifying it be giving up the weapon while others kept it? I believe that we stand at a time of reflection and a time of transit. We must not despair; it is a time of creating awareness, but above all creating trust. I must say that I respect some documents which were presented earlier and I respect the effort which was made by dear friends, such as Ambassador Idriss, but I must point out that even that document, really, was neither fair nor balanced, because basically it focused on moving forward efforts in an area in particular, without a clear commitment to negotiate in the field of nuclear disarmament.

For our part, we are fully ready to assist you, Alicia, in your tasks as President. Cuba will never be an obstacle in the progress of this Conference, but, I repeat, neither to dramatize nor to force the issue, but to seek pragmatic approaches. I really believe that we must not cut off financial support to the Conference, but we must be realistic and objective and hold meetings when there are clear objectives in relation to what we are seeking in those meetings, in order to continue avoiding this line of long statements and sterile discussions, because we are really repeating ourselves. I believe that we also have to report to our capitals that we are working and to justify our presence, above all those who are basically focused on the field of disarmament, but I think that we must be efficient in this regard and hold meetings when we have a clear proposal to discuss or when we have secured the political commitments which are needed to hold a commitment in this room.

Having said this, I believe that ultimately we are not pessimistic. We are optimistic, because in the end we have always found a way. There are processes which require years, like the passage of history, if it is seen as a process, and not everything is obtained with the speed that some claim. So we will support you, Alicia, and in due time we will follow the course of the previous Presidents, since this year a major challenge is facing the remaining Presidents. I believe that there have been excellent Presidents and what has affected us has not been a lack of effort or talent or excellent leadership. At the same time we consider that sooner or later, if trust is created and the necessary agreements are created, we will be in a position to negotiate, because that is what we are, negotiators and diplomats.

Mr. Hoffmann (Germany): I always listen with great attention to statements in the Conference on Disarmament, and today we have heard a number of very interesting statements. But I think everybody will understand when I say that I listen always with particular attention when my colleague and friend Ambassador Akram takes the floor. I intend to make a few comments on his statements, but before I do so I would like to congratulate you also, Madam President, on assuming the presidency. You will have the full support of the German delegation, and I wish you every success.

I would also like to thank you for the way you laid out your own programme of work, so to speak. We find this interesting as an approach. We are aware of the difficulties

of coming up with a programme of work for the Conference, and it is certainly an interesting idea to also involve the regional groups more actively. I think, basically, it is incumbent on every presidency to make an effort to table a programme of work, but of course it is at the end of the day always a matter for the President to assess whether this seems to be worthwhile or useful. But I think, as such, it is always desirable for us to aim to table a draft programme of work.

I would also like to congratulate Ambassador Macedo Soares for a very thought-provoking statement. Now, a few points on the statement by Ambassador Akram.

Firstly, when he says that certain Powers are ready for arms control only when it is cost-free, I think that this is a somewhat dangerous line of reasoning. First of all, I am not sure whether it is actually empirically true, because I could well imagine that if some had had their way, they would still like to have chemical or biological weapons. You simply cannot know. If you go back to the negotiating history record, you will see that all interested participants fought very hard for certain positions, so that indicates that there is still a material interest in achieving certain outcomes.

It is a somewhat dangerous argument to make because in a way it devalues existing arms control agreements. It basically says they are not really worth much because no one needs them any more, so to speak.

Secondly, about the question of whether the rules of procedure are the problem. His argument was that other arms control agreements were successfully negotiated in this body with the same rules of procedure. That is certainly true, but the question is how the rules of procedure were actually employed by those who participated in these negotiations. Without having checked the record, in my recollection I do not think there was ever a situation where one member State objected to the opening of negotiations.

The rules of procedure are, as we all know, a very complicated matter, in particular the consensus rule, and there is a very delicate way of playing the game. But when it comes to a situation where 1 or 2 States out of 65, in this case, and in other United Nations bodies it is sometimes even more than that, when very few employ the consensus rule de facto as a veto instrument, then we are in a different ball game. I would like to quote the very thought-provoking statement by our friend and colleague Ambassador Macedo Soares, who said: "A member State that freely joined the Conference on Disarmament, the purpose of which is to negotiate legal instruments on disarmament and arms control, cannot invoke its security situation in order to prevent a negotiation that is deemed appropriate by a great majority of member States, if not by all." I think that is absolutely spot on, if I may say so.

My third point is about the issue of fissile material, in particular. I am a bit puzzled when I look at the logical line of reasoning. On page 2 of his statement, Ambassador Akram explained again why Pakistan for the past two years has clearly stated the reasons why it cannot agree to negotiations on an FMCT in the Conference, and so on. We have all been aware of that and we have all been witnesses of that; this is basically why we do not have a programme of work and why we have not started negotiations in this body, which is actually the task we should perform. But then he went on to say, on page 3, and I quote this because I find it very interesting: "From Pakistan's perspective, this requires negotiating a treaty on fissile materials that not only bans future production but involves the reduction of fissile material stockpiles. Only when the issue of asymmetry in stockpiles is addressed through reductions can there be a level playing field. We are therefore in favour of a fissile material treaty rather than a fissile material cut-off treaty, which will be a general disarmament instrument and not just a quasi-non-proliferation measure."

Now, in my intellectual understanding, this means that he is not, as such, against having a negotiation in this body – and he has made very clear that Pakistan thinks this issue should be negotiated only in the Conference and not outside it. That is a very fair

point of view to have, but my understanding is that Pakistan is ready to negotiate in the Conference on fissile material. Of course, we all have different views on this and that. Some questions are more important than others. But what I fail to understand is why there is this fundamental opposition to opening the process.

Of course, I am well aware of the famous “C” in this acronym: whether it is a cut-off treaty or not. The question, then, for me arises: to what extent must this difference in approach be reflected in the task that we give ourselves, that is to say, in the programme of work, in the mandate that we give ourselves?

We have differences of view. It is classic that when people sit down for negotiations on any given subject, they have different starting points and ask themselves to what extent we have to reflect these different starting points in the mandate. It has happened many times before that they found a way to somehow finesse the issues so that everybody could live with it.

Madam President, when we try to formulate the mandate for our work programme, it would, of course, be very interesting to see whether there is not a way to finesse the issue in one way or the other. I invite the delegation of Pakistan to make its views known in bilateral consultations with you, or in whatever form seems to be useful, on that point and then to see whether there is a way of formulating the issue so that we can actually start our work.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Many thanks to the Ambassador of Germany for his words. You are right when you say that we Presidents should always table a programme of work. It is true, all my predecessors as President have done so, and concerning that work, I admire it, but, as I said in my statement, that work has not met with the success we hoped for as the Conference on Disarmament. Consequently, in my statement I invited you all individually or regionally or cross-regionally, if I may put it like that, if you have any ideas about the programme of work or how it should be, please let us express them, and I will table it with pleasure. As President I have no problem. We will continue with our bilateral or multilateral consultations, with several at the same time, but I do not consider it worthwhile — and nor does my capital — for Colombia to put out a programme of work simply for discussion, only for it to be filed away again. Let us make an effort involving all of us, and let us all try to bring out a programme of work in which we all try to make it a win-win. The truth is that the exercise whereby each President brings out a programme of work only for the same exercise to have to begin again the next month, we think has perhaps been followed enough. We respect the positions of other delegations, but we believe that the time has come when we must at least consider another workable strategy, within the framework of the rules of procedure, to see whether we can bring out this programme of work.

We have in fact carried out many bilateral consultations with many countries; not with all, unfortunately. For this we are waiting for the regional groups, or we can meet them or the coordinators of the regional groups, that is, those who transmit to their groups what we have discussed here and what has been raised here and how we could work much better together. We are open to all proposals. We want something very inclusive for all and, since you referred to the Ambassador of Pakistan, we have indeed held meetings with him, we would like somehow to achieve a rapprochement between Pakistan and the other countries, so that we can all move the Conference on Disarmament forward. The goal of the Chair, much more than to divide, is to bring everyone together.

I now wish to give the floor to the Ambassador of Japan, Ambassador Aiko Suda.

Mr. Suda (Japan): First of all, Madam, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament at this very important juncture of our efforts to make progress in this meeting.

I did not intend to speak today, but after listening to the various interesting, stimulating and provoking statements of our colleagues, I felt that I should speak out. What I would like to say is that we should look straight forward in assuming our responsibility as members of the Conference.

Japan has been standing firm for many decades in its call for the total elimination of nuclear weapons. However, everybody knows that total elimination cannot be achieved overnight, or by a single convention. It requires a cumulative process of practical, concrete measures and efforts. In this regard it is obvious, as the preamble of the NPT indicates, that the most urgent step in this process is the cessation of the manufacture of nuclear weapons. I cannot imagine taking any road towards a world free of nuclear weapons after the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty without first banning at least the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. The issue of an FMCT has reached the level of sufficient maturity, which everybody knows too, to embark on formal negotiations. We have a good basic mandate, the Shannon mandate, which is carefully prepared, balanced and flexible. It is not helpful at all for us, or for our work in the Conference, to go back and reopen that compromise.

We have an achievement in the programme of work CD/1864, agreed by consensus in May 2009. With all the constructive, balanced compromise that we have achieved, why have we not been able to move forward since May 2009? The fact is clear and simple. Despite the consensus agreement on a programme of work in CD/1864, a State party opposed the implementation of that programme of work for the reason of international security. On balance, it is not a problem of CD/1864, neither is it a question of the maturity of the issue.

Japan is quite ready to participate in efforts to further develop the other three main issues, namely, nuclear disarmament, negative security assurances and PAROS. However, Japan cannot support any argument which in effect prevents the immediate start of negotiations on FMCT by saying falsely, for instance, that the other three issues are quite mature, so why not treat all four issues together and wait to start negotiation on FMCT until we reach some agreement from that point of view?

Japan considers the Conference to be the most important forum for negotiating disarmament treaties. It is because, however, the Conference is considered to make progress in world disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament, through its substantive work. In other words, what is absolutely important for Japan and most of us here is disarmament, not the Conference itself. So if the Conference remains dysfunctional further, it is understandable that many States parties, then many States, will lose interest in the Conference and seek other ways to actually work on nuclear disarmament, in particular negotiations on an FMCT.

Mr. Rao (India): Madam President, let me warmly congratulate you on assuming the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I am sure that with your skills, diplomatic ability and personal charm, you will be able to guide the work of the Conference successfully. I assure you of the full support of my delegation in the discharge of your responsibilities. I should also like to thank your predecessor, our colleague and friend Ambassador Wang, for his energetic and tireless efforts to move our work forward.

Let me also thank you for convening a plenary meeting on the Conference's programme of work. My delegation has always upheld the unique importance of the Conference as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. Efforts that bring us closer to negotiations on disarmament and international security issues and uphold the invaluable and inclusive nature of this forum are always welcome. Conversely, we should try to avoid things that move us away from consensus.

I do not wish to repeat my delegation's views on a programme of work for the Conference. These were stated in the plenaries of 22 February and 30 March this year. I only wish to reiterate that the Conference's first order of priority should be to adopt a programme of work and begin substantive work, including negotiations, at the earliest. India will not stand in the way if consensus emerges on a programme of work, picking up from where we were in terms of consensus decision CD/1864 of May 2009, especially if such a decision facilitates the commencement of substantive work, including negotiation of an FMCT. This is without prejudice to the priority we attach to nuclear disarmament.

India has been consistent in its support for global, complete and verifiable nuclear disarmament. As a member of the G21 and of the Non-Aligned Movement, we have attached the highest priority to nuclear disarmament. We believe that nuclear disarmament can be achieved by a step-by-step process underwritten by universal commitment and an agreed multilateral framework for achieving global and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament. There is a need for a meaningful dialogue among all States possessing nuclear weapons to build trust and confidence and reduce the salience of nuclear weapons in international affairs and security doctrines.

Mr. Kwon Haeryong (Republic of Korea): Madam President, first of all, I would like to begin by congratulating you on your assumption of the very challenging yet vital responsibility of the President of the Conference on Disarmament. I am sure that under your able leadership, the discussions of the Conference will contribute to a breakthrough in the deadlock in the Conference. Of course, I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation as you carry out your valuable work.

I will not reiterate our position today. I would like to just make one suggestion. I fully understand that different security environments often call for different positions on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Taking this reality into account, I support practical steps for a systemic and progressive effort. So I would like to suggest more focused discussions on some bottleneck issues on which we have sharply different views. In my opinion, it would be more useful to list the different opinions on each item rather than to reiterate the same messages, as we have done in the past for a long time.

As far as I understand, the most hard-fought battlefield and most bottlenecked of the four agendas is FMCT. So I would like to suggest that we get down to the case of existing stocks first, and then other related concepts such as definition, scope and verification of the FMCT. I think it is more effective and efficient to have more focused discussion on each item, one by one, respectively, to narrow down differences that we have at this moment or, with luck, to find the solution. In the period of your presidency, we can focus mostly on FMCT issues, and then, if we have enough time, we should also find ways to discuss other major issues such as nuclear disarmament, PAROS and negative security assurances.

This approach would be helpful to build trust and facilitate the formal process to contribute to diminishing misunderstanding and to enhance shared confidence and understanding.

Lastly, the Korean delegation echoes the opinion expressed by the German Ambassador on making efforts to table the programme of work, if possible.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Ambassador of Korea. I wish to emphasize to him that his proposal will be analysed by the Chair, but I would also remind him that on many occasions his proposal has been implemented and tested by this forum with very little success. I believe that the time has come for us to be much more creative, and for you too to help us to table a programme of work. If you have excellent ideas, if you are very creative in this regard, the Chair is ready to receive any idea which you may have, to hold any meeting which you may require. But simply sitting down to discuss and discuss and discuss and discuss the same thing – we think that at least during this term we are going

to have a break. I don't know what is going to happen with others, but during this term we are going to have a breather, so as to try and see or at least to attempt to carry out an exercise on what is happening here, how we could work better and where we really want to go. If, as I said in my opening statement, you have initiatives on a programme of work, I will table it with great pleasure, without any problem. I will make every effort, but as I said, as a delegate I have respected the work done by my predecessors, I share it, I believe that their proposals would be the same as those which Colombia would make, and that means they have already been explored without success. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Mr. Se Pyong.

Mr. So Se Pyong (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Madam President, let me first congratulate you on assuming your presidency and assure you of my full support and cooperation. Let me also take this opportunity to say that I highly appreciate the excellent work of Ambassador Wang of China during the presidency to move the work of the Conference much forward.

My delegation warmly welcomes your intention to work with the member States of the Conference in an open, inclusive and transparent manner. Regarding the programme of work, my delegation has reiterated on many occasions its position and its views, so I will not repeat them again today.

Today, the role of disarmament machinery is increasingly important in international efforts for world peace and security. In particular, the Conference on Disarmament should enhance its role in nuclear disarmament. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea attaches importance to the Conference as the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament, and recognizes that this organ is the most useful mechanism to promote global disarmament.

It is from this point of view that we look forward to the early commencement of substantive work. To this end, we will display devotion with patience. And in this regard let me once again express my firm resolve to continue my cooperation with you in the coming days.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much. The six Presidents have been able to work this year as a team. We believe it is very important, because presidential terms which last only a month, beginning again from scratch each time, we really think make no sense. We believe that it is best if we are all able to follow a programme of work of these six Presidents. That is what we decided, despite our ideological differences in many areas. We believe it is important to try to follow a course of action during this year. That is why I emphasize the Chair's respect for the work of her three predecessors.

There are no more speakers on the list. I wish to know whether anyone else from any other delegation wishes to speak. I see Pakistan. The Ambassador of Pakistan, you have the floor.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): I have taken the floor to respond to the very valuable comments made by my friend and colleague, the Ambassador of Germany. I appreciate the seriousness with which he listens to me, which is not necessarily the case with some of my other colleagues, but I will try and respond to your questions, queries and points as best I can.

As to the idea about what I said about the agreements that have been signed and being cost-free, empirically, of course, one would have to look at the record and one could do that. But from my own experience since the last time I was in this city, in this organization, in the mid-1980s, when we started negotiations on the Chemical Weapons Convention, certainly — this was also the time of the cold war — the fact that we reached the point where everyone was ready, in particular the two major super-Powers at the time,

to conclude an agreement on chemical weapons came about as a result of their recognition that eliminating chemical weapons would not undermine their security interests. I presume that that was also the guiding principle, or the bottom line, behind negotiating a convention banning biological weapons.

I think that of all the three weapons of mass destruction, as we call them, biological, chemical and nuclear, if a country possesses nuclear weapons and bases its deterrence capability on those weapons, my argument is that to have chemical and biological weapons is then unnecessary, at least for those who possess nuclear weapons. Once you have these nuclear weapons, the major nuclear-weapon Powers are then ready to give up the other means of mass destruction. Therefore, they become redundant. Similarly, as to the issue of testing and as to the issue of existing stocks, we know very well that the major nuclear-weapon States have conducted several hundred nuclear tests, in fact, more tests than would blow up the world several times over. For them, further nuclear testing became really irrelevant. That is why it became obvious that this was an area where progress could be made by agreeing not to conduct further tests.

So also with fissile material stocks. We also know that there are fairly large quantities of fissile material stocks in the possession of the major nuclear-weapon States. For that reason, they have themselves already declared a moratorium. Therefore, having once declared a moratorium, to convert that moratorium into an international treaty is not such a major cost for them. So that is the reasoning.

Now, regarding the use of the rules of procedure — obviously the basis on which the Conference on Disarmament was created — I remember this very well, because at the time, the two super-Powers during the cold war days argued in favour of the rule of consensus applying to both procedural as well as substantive issues. In fact, it was Pakistan at that time which argued that the rule of consensus should only apply in the case of substantive issues but not in the case of procedural issues. That is a matter of record that can be checked. Be that as it may, the fact remains that the rule of consensus has been used, time and again, to protect one's interests in this body. We have seen that very clearly in the context, and we continue to see that very clearly in the context, of issues such as negotiations on negative security assurances or on nuclear disarmament, which again are issues on which a large number of countries in this room are ready to start negotiations but a few countries are not ready to do so. So once again, the rule of consensus is being used for what is seen as protecting their national security interests.

Then the third question was why some might oppose the opening of the process on FMCT. The issue of stocks, or reduction of stocks, could be finessed, I suppose, in the programme of work. That is the point. Here, I just want to make it clear where we stand, because, from our perspective, keeping in mind our security interests, for us a simple ban on future production does not address our concerns. In fact, it accentuates our security concerns. So what we really do want to see is a commitment to negotiating a treaty that not only bans future production but also undertakes to reduce existing stockpiles. That is something which needs to be clarified and agreed to up front, before we start negotiations.

I hope that that clarifies our position on this. I just wanted to take a few more minutes to also respond to comments that were made — rather indirect comments — that I think were addressed to us by our distinguished colleagues, the ambassadors of Brazil and Algeria, about relying on nuclear weapons for our security. If I understood their point correctly, I would like to respond that this is a Pandora's box which we did not open. We had to respond to an objective reality, and therefore our nuclear deterrence.

But as I have said today, and as we have said in the past, we are ready to negotiate a treaty on a nuclear disarmament convention. We agree that if we eliminate nuclear weapons, that is the real ultimate guarantee of security for everybody. But we cannot do it

unilaterally. We need to be part of a process in which all the nuclear-weapon States are involved. We really see no reason why, since we have heard from the leaders of all the major nuclear-weapon States about their commitment to nuclear disarmament, why we cannot begin negotiations on nuclear disarmament.

I understand that nuclear disarmament will be a lengthy process. We have no doubt about the difficulties involved. But at least we should make a beginning; at least we should make a commitment here in this august body, which was created with the specific purpose initially of negotiating nuclear disarmament, to at least agree to have a negotiating mandate in a programme of work for nuclear disarmament.

Mr. van den IJssel (Netherlands): I am sorry for taking the floor this late in the debate — but it gives me the advantage of having listened very seriously and very carefully to all the interventions — to respond to some of the points made. I will be brief, because many of the points raised are my points, and I would like to avoid repeating points made in several debates.

Three points: first of all, on the programme of work. As you are aware, the Netherlands has always been very flexible on the issue of the programme of work. We supported CD/599. We supported CD/1864 and we supported CD/1889. We would be open to any modified versions. If indeed, as was suggested, we can find by a slight adaptation of the text of CD/1864, CD/1889 or CD/599 a modus suitable to all, we will happily support that. Perhaps, even more than that, we will actively be supportive of those kinds of efforts.

What we do not support, however, are changes of a nature that would lead us away from the consensus that we have. I do not think efforts in that direction would be helpful.

My second point is on the nature of what we are doing in the Conference. We remain to be convinced of the usefulness of making a programme of work an end in itself. A “work programme lite”, as it has often been called, that will not open up a real prospect for negotiations is, in our view, not the right approach.

My last point is that many delegations have raised the issue of the very existence of this body, and we share the view of those who stressed its importance. But exactly for that reason, we should be critical about its functioning, especially because of its importance. The fact that with the rules of procedure and working methods we were able to make progress 15 years ago is in itself not a convincing argument that we should declare these rules of procedure, these working methods, to be sacrosanct 15 years of stagnation later. That is not being very critical, in my view.

Therefore, I would very much welcome an open-minded approach by all members of the Conference and the possibility of looking together at how we can change the way we do our work, or do not do our work.

Let me stress that the idea is not to destroy; it is to build.

Madam President, we will be very supportive of course in your efforts, and we are looking forward to the remaining period of your presidency.

Mr. Khelif (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like only to clarify some elements of Ambassador Jazaïry’s statement, which was a general statement and not directed at any particular State here in the Conference. In his statement, he said that it was the duty of any Government in the world to defend the interests of its citizens; however, we believe that this security should not be built in an isolated way that ignores the security of others. This is on the one hand; on the other hand, this security should not be built on the possession of weapons of mass destruction. This is Algeria’s position, which we have established in numerous statements; we believe that any approach to a programme of work or

international instruments for adoption should be based on embodying the concept of undiminished security for all.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Many thanks to the Ambassador of Algeria. Are there any other delegations which wish to take the floor? I see there are none.

I would like to make a few observations. The Ambassador of Cuba has informed us that he is unable to take the Chair as the fifth President for this year, owing to other activities which require his presence: certain obligations which the Ambassador of Cuba is unfortunately unable to reschedule.

The Ambassador of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has also said that he is prepared to exchange terms with Cuba. Rule 9 of the rules of procedure of the Conference provides that "When the Conference is in session, the presidency of the Conference shall rotate among all its members; each President shall preside for a four-working-week period. The rotation which began in January 1979, based on the English alphabetical list of membership, shall be followed." There are no precedents in this matter in the history of the Conference. From my consultations with regional coordinators and ambassadors at the bilateral level I understand there are no objections to the permutation of the terms of office of Cuba and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. I would like to know whether we can take a decision on this exchange of terms of office between Cuba and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

It is so decided.

That concludes our plenary meeting for today. The next meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 9 June 2011, at 10 a.m. I shall be outlining our programme for the following week, so that all delegations can come prepared for that meeting; we do not yet know whether it will be a plenary or an informal meeting. At all events, we will try to ensure that it is as convenient as possible for all the representatives in the Conference on Disarmament.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.