



General Assembly

Seventieth session

First Committee

19th meeting

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Official Records

Chair: Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands)

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda items 88 to 105 (continued)

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

The Chair: This afternoon the Committee will continue to hear the remaining speakers on the rolling list for the disarmament machinery cluster. Delegations are kindly reminded to observe the time limit of five minutes when speaking in their national capacity and seven minutes when speaking on behalf of a group.

Mr. Mažeiks (Latvia): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the informal group of observer States to the Conference on Disarmament, whose members are Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brunei Darussalam, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Jordan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Oman, the Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, the Republic of Moldova, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Slovenia, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the United Arab Emirates, Uruguay and the Holy See.

I am pleased to speak also on behalf of the following 32 States, which include 21 States members of the Conference on Disarmament (CD): Angola, Austria,

Belgium, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Chile, Finland, Germany, Guinea-Bissau, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Libya, Liechtenstein, Madagascar, Malawi, Mexico, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Palau, Poland, Romania, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Slovakia, Solomon Islands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Ukraine.

The composition of the group of informal States is cross-regional, formed as it is by 39 States representing every region in the world. More than half of them have been waiting for more than two decades to become full members of the CD, but they have been given no compelling reason for that long wait. We would like to emphasize our strong commitment to advancing the goals of global disarmament and non-proliferation through comprehensive, inclusive and effective engagement within the CD, as the sole negotiating body within the United Nations disarmament machinery. In our view, we should implement the idea enshrined in the final declaration of the General Assembly in 1979, at its first special session devoted to disarmament (resolution S/10-2), that all nations in the world are responsible for international peace and security and therefore all have the right to participate in the international disarmament negotiations.

We remain deeply concerned about the long-standing deadlock in the Conference and its persistent inability to commence substantive work. All the observer States agree that there is an urgent need to reignite the CD's work. We regret the fact that since 1999, when the last enlargement of the Conference took place, no further action has been taken on membership,

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despite the fact that rule 2 of its rules of procedure stipulates that the membership of the Conference shall be reviewed at regular intervals. Sixteen years can hardly be considered a regular interval. The observer States consider that the developments and challenges affecting the global security environment should be reflected in the appropriate and due inclusion of all interested States in the Conference on Disarmament.

We believe that the Conference possesses the tools necessary to broker disarmament and arms-control instruments that can have a global and relevant impact and that therefore require global participation. We would therefore once again like to urge the Conference member States to do their best to overcome the obstacles that have prevented it from functioning at its full operational capability.

In the light of this, we reiterate our call for a special rapporteur to be nominated as soon as possible to review the issue of membership. We are all aware that appointing a rapporteur will not automatically lead to any specific outcomes and that the decisions are taken by the CD member States in accordance with its rules of procedure. Paragraphs 113, 120 and 122 of resolution S-10/2 refer to the CD's evolution, which in our view is not only an area where the CD could show progress but that through the route of enlarging the membership could help to overcome its prolonged impasse. While enlargement as such is not a goal in itself, universalization of the Conference's format and renewal of its global relevance certainly are.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of New Zealand to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/70/L.14.

Ms. Higgie (New Zealand): I am taking the floor to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/70/L.14, entitled "Report of the Conference on Disarmament", submitted by New Zealand as outgoing President of the Conference on Disarmament (CD). As part of yesterday's panel on disarmament machinery, I have already had the opportunity to address the Committee on the subject of the CD's work in 2015, and I shall therefore limit my comments today to the draft resolution.

The draft resolution was prepared in Geneva and was the subject of informal consultations there before being circulated in New York. The language of the text adheres closely to what has been agreed on in previous years and, in keeping with tradition, it is New Zealand's

hope that the draft resolution on the report of the CD will again be adopted this year without a vote.

In reaffirming the role of the CD as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community, the draft resolution appreciates the strong support expressed for the Conference in 2015. It recognizes the significant efforts that have been made throughout the year to try to break the deadlock in the CD, appreciating in that regard the informal discussions held pursuant to the decision on a schedule of activities and welcoming the efforts of the co-Chair of the informal working group with a mandate to produce a programme of work.

At the same time, however, and bearing in mind the fact that in 2015 the CD neither commenced negotiations nor achieved consensus on a programme of work, the draft resolution also reflects concern about the ongoing stalemate in the Conference and reiterates the overwhelming call for greater flexibility, so that substantive work can begin in the CD without further delay. The draft resolution references the traditional request to the current and incoming Presidents of the Conference to conduct consultations during the intersessional period with a view to facilitating the start of substantive work, including negotiations, early in 2016. As was emphasized in Geneva, both New Zealand and Nigeria, as the current and incoming Presidents, respectively, will remain available to all CD members and observers that may have new proposals capable of breaking the impasse.

Finally, the draft resolution touches on two other relevant issues. It emphasizes the importance of engagement between civil society and the Conference, and it also recognizes the value of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) as a stand-alone, autonomous institution. In that regard, the draft resolution notes with concern the current difficult financial and institutional situation confronting UNIDIR.

As I said at the outset, it is my hope that the Committee can adopt the draft resolution on the report of the Conference on Disarmament without a vote.

Ms. Seo Eunji (Republic of Korea): This year marks the seventieth anniversary of both the end of the Second World War and the establishment of the United Nations. Over the decades, our shared goal of a safer and more secure world has seen us make some significant progress on disarmament. The disarmament

machinery of the United Nations, including the Conference on Disarmament (CD) and the Disarmament Commission, has played a central role in making those achievements possible.

While today the need for further progress in multilateral disarmament is greater than ever, it is regrettable that the United Nations disarmament machinery has long been unable to function as an effective forum for disarmament. My delegation joins the international community's earnest call for renewal of the CD so that it can make progress towards the resumption of substantive negotiations. At the beginning of the 2015 session, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon reminded us once again that the mandate of the CD is to negotiate and conclude disarmament treaties. Over the past two years, some serious efforts have been made to bring the Conference back to life. In an important step forward, an informal working group was re-established this year, enabling us to continue our discussions on possible options for a programme of work.

Structured and substantive discussions were held on the four core agenda items, according to scheduled activities. My delegation was particularly encouraged by the in-depth discussions on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, which built on last year's discussion. Moreover, the final report of the Group of Governmental Experts to make recommendations on possible aspects that could contribute to, but not negotiate, a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (see A/70/81) was adopted by consensus, and makes recommendations on possible aspects that could contribute to the negotiations of the treaty. We believe that this report could serve as a good basis for future negotiations. As we maintain our efforts to break the current impasse, the Republic of Korea sincerely hopes that the CD can make concrete progress next year, building on the positive developments achieved in the 2015 session.

The Republic of Korea notes with disappointment that the Disarmament Commission was unable to agree on the new agenda or to make substantive progress despite the beginning of a new three-year cycle this year. We cannot accept the passing of another cycle without any recommendation. Efforts should be made to stimulate the discussion of the Commission with utmost urgency. The Republic of Korea looks forward to the flexibility and cooperation of Member States,

as well as constructive discussion to break the current deadlock.

Mr. AlAjmi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, my delegation would like to align itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Group of Arab States, as well as the statement delivered by the representative Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (A/C.1/70/PV.18).

We reiterate our previous position with regard to the importance of a multilateral approach to the challenges within the field of disarmament, and of strengthened cooperation and coordination at the international level in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. For that reason, strengthening the disarmament machinery, in particular the Conference on Disarmament (CD) and the Disarmament Commission, must be our common goal in order to ensure that it can continue to deliver on its mandates, as per the first and second special sessions of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament in 1978 and 1982.

In that regard, Kuwait expresses its concern regarding the stalemate in the CD, the only negotiating forum within the United Nations for matters of disarmament. The lack of political will on the part of the major States has prevented the CD from achieving its goals. The treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, and other relevant treaties are also extremely important.

Kuwait attaches great importance to the Disarmament Commission as it addresses the most important new initiatives and presents recommendations on crucial issues in the field of disarmament. The Commission, however, has suffered from a lack of consensus on relevant matters since the year 2000. In that regard, we reiterate the position of the Group of Arab States on the importance of conducting a comprehensive review of the Disarmament Commission with a view to updating it as soon as possible within the context of a new special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. We call on all Member States to engage positively with a view to agreeing on the relevant objectives.

In conclusion, my delegation hopes that the international community will continue to support the United Nations disarmament machinery so that we can address all concerns resulting from the

proliferation of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, and one day celebrate the complete elimination of such weapons.

Mr. Al-Taie (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): Since this is the first time my delegation is taking the floor, I would like to convey my delegation's sincere congratulations on your election, Sir, to chair our Committee in 2015.

At the outset I would like to take this opportunity to express my delegation's support for the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and Egypt on behalf of the Group of Arab States (A/C.1/70/PV.18).

Iraq attaches special importance to the Conference on Disarmament (CD) as the only multilateral forum for the negotiation of disarmament matters. It enjoys a successful track record; however, regrettably, for the past 19 years it has suffered a stalemate and has not been able to exercise the negotiating role mandated to it. Efforts of Member States of the CD from that time and to date have been unsuccessful. In that context, the delegation of Iraq reiterates the importance of summoning the political will necessary to revitalize the CD despite the complicated circumstances. The international community is witnessing a heightening of international crises and risks due to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and because of the stalemate in the area of disarmament. All of these elements threaten international peace and security and cause resources to be diverted away from the objective of achieving sustainable development.

Accordingly, Iraq once again calls on the international community to step up its efforts to reach a comprehensive and balanced programme of work that fulfils the aspirations of all, including with respect to the CD. We also emphasize the importance of intensifying efforts and cooperation between the Member States of the CD and between the six consecutive Presidents during the 2015 session so that we can achieve progress towards the objectives to which we all aspire in the field of disarmament. We must not allow the momentum that has been built to diminish.

Iraq agrees with many States that nuclear disarmament must remain a priority for the CD in accordance with the outcome document (resolution S-10/2) of first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament in 1978, in addition to the advisory opinion of 8 July 1996 issued by the International Court of Justice, which reaffirms

that the threat or use of nuclear weapons violates international law.

Iraq emphasizes the importance of the role of the Disarmament Commission as the international multilateral forum for deliberations on disarmament within the United Nations. However, we deplore the fact that the Commission is now facing failure and a stalemate that has lasted since 1999. We therefore welcomed the General Assembly's adoption by consensus of resolution 69/77, entitled "Report of the Disarmament Commission", and we call on member States to show the flexibility we need to succeed in our negotiations and arrive at effective recommendations on the two items adopted by the Commission during its current 2015-2017 session, on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and on confidence-building.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of Nepal to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/70/L.53.

Mr. Lamsal (Nepal): I thank you, Sir, for giving me the floor to introduce the draft resolution under agenda item 98 (d) entitled "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific", the text of which is contained in document A/C.1/70/L.53. The draft resolution's sponsors are Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, the Federated States of Micronesia, Mongolia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Pakistan, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Viet Nam and my own country, Nepal. My delegation is sincerely grateful to all the current sponsors and those delegations intending to sponsor the draft resolution.

Nepal believes that the Regional Centre can be used for facilitating dialogues and deliberations aimed at fostering understanding, cooperation and confidence-building in the area of peace and disarmament in the region and beyond. Despite its temporary relocation this year to Bangkok in the wake of the earthquakes that occurred in Nepal in April and May, the Centre has continued to promote dialogue and confidence-building by organizing conferences and seminars on thematic issues and undertaking capacity-building projects in the areas of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. The Government of Nepal is ready to provide all the necessary support in order to arrange the resumption of the Regional Centre's operations in Kathmandu as soon as possible.

As the host country of the Regional Centre, Nepal is committed to giving its full support to an enhanced and constructive role for the Centre in our region by consolidating the Kathmandu process with the aim of contributing to peace and disarmament in the region through a renewed sense of confidence and understanding. Without effective programmes in this area at the regional level we cannot achieve the goals of peace, disarmament and non-proliferation. The Regional Centre's programmes are funded from voluntary contributions, which are not sufficient to sustain its activities in the mandated areas. I would like to take this opportunity to express Nepal's sincere appreciation to those Member States that have continued to support the Regional Centre, including through voluntary contributions for its programmes and activities. We are confident that more Member States will lend their support to expanding and enriching the Centre's activities in the cause of promoting peace and stability in the region and around the world.

It is in that context that my delegation has the honour to introduce on behalf of the sponsors draft resolution A/C.1/70/L.53, entitled "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific". My delegation is confident that the Committee will adopt it by consensus.

Mr. Yermakov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I will begin with a statement in my national capacity. We note that most speakers have already expressed their concern about the lack of progress in overcoming the stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission. On the whole, of course, Russia shares those concerns. However, many of the proposed remedies are a long way from being able to solve the problems that exist. On the contrary, they actually distract from the real work of organizing the Conference on Disarmament's negotiation activities, as provided for in its mandate.

Russia opposes any attempt to replace the Conference's complex but comprehensive work by seeking solutions susceptible to a simple vote in the General Assembly. Yes, we can vote, but what then? We cannot give in to the illusion that a simple show of hands or push of a button can solve complex problems of national, regional and international security. The only sure way to come up with effective solutions and thereby ensure equal and indivisible security for all is through a negotiating process based on the principle of consensus. We do not agree with those attempting

to cast doubt on a fundamental principle that, by the way, is enshrined in the outcome document of the General Assembly's first special session devoted to disarmament (resolution S/10-2).

Let us try to figure this out. In the place of the authoritative, professional and expert point of view of the Conference on Disarmament, we are being offered some open-ended group with a negotiating mandate focused on a single issue, that of nuclear disarmament. With all due respect, where does that leave the fundamental principle of a comprehensive and balanced approach to disarmament aimed at enabling implementation of the disarmament process in a way that will ensure that our world becomes more secure and less conflicted rather than the reverse?

One gets the impression that some people are making enormous efforts to convince themselves and others that a nuclear-free world can be built without the participation of the nuclear Powers, a proposition so absurd as to be simply not worthy of comment. One need only reiterate a single undeniable truth, which is that any initiative that casts doubt on how crucial the nuclear Powers' participation is to the process of progressing towards nuclear disarmament has no future whatsoever.

The idea of creating an open-ended group of nuclear disarmament institutions with a debatable mandate also gives rise to serious doubts. What is the point of a new structure that reduces the mandate of the Disarmament Commission to a single item on its agenda? After all, there is no guarantee that the proposed group would be able to arrive at some generally acceptable outcome, while the funding for such an effort would have to be enormous, with all of it coming out of our United Nations budget. In our opinion, it makes far more sense if we all start working effectively within our existing frameworks, whether just in the Disarmament Commission or in the Conference on Disarmament, which, incidentally, includes every member of the United Nations. And let us not be coy about it — half of the delegations here do not participate actively in the Disarmament Commission.

We see as more promising the idea put forward by Indonesia for convening a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. However, it can succeed only through careful preparation. Such a special session would require consensus agreement well ahead of time on its aims, agenda and schedule, because

without it the disarmament community would risk being split by new divisions rather than achieving unity.

We urge all our colleagues to look very closely at what they are being asked to support. There is no question that a majority, if not all, of our new initiatives arise out of a sense of frustration with the situation in the area of nuclear disarmament. But we have to understand that listening to our emotions is the absolute worst way to go about our responsible work. If we really want to achieve positive results on disarmament, we must do all we can to ensure a balance of interests. There is simply no other way.

I will conclude my statement by affirming that Russia is ready for dialogue on any issues within the United Nations disarmament machinery, on the sole condition that any such dialogue should take into account the interests of every State, without exception, and should avoid any double standards. We support a very careful attitude to all United Nations disarmament entities, including, naturally, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, which, in view of its current circumstances, is in need of our general support.

I will now speak on behalf of the group of States with like-minded views on the Conference on Disarmament. This year the group of States was joined by Argentina, Armenia, Belarus, China, Ethiopia, India, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Pakistan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe. The statement was drafted in English and I will therefore read it in that language.

(spoke in English)

Recalling the joint statements made in the First Committee by the group of like-minded States at the General Assembly's sixty-seventh, sixty-eighth and sixty-ninth sessions, we reaffirm our commitment to a resumption of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) without further delay. We are confident that tangible progress on the issues of multilateral disarmament and strengthening the international regimes for arms control and non-proliferation can be achieved only within the framework of the existing multilateral disarmament mechanisms and the Conference on Disarmament in particular, while taking due account of the national security priorities of Member States. We believe that the Conference, as the sole multilateral negotiating

forum, with its fundamental principle of consensus and its membership, cannot be replaced by any other forum for the purpose of addressing the complex issues on its agenda.

We commend the efforts of all the Presidents of the CD for 2015 to reach a consensus on its programme of work. At the same time, we are concerned about the lack of progress in that regard. We welcome the establishment of the informal working group with a mandate to produce a programme of work that is robust in substance and progressive in its implementation. We commend its co-Chair, the Ambassador of Finland, for her efforts to find an acceptable solution, and welcome the adoption by consensus of her report, contained in document CD/2033.

We call on States participating in the work of the Conference to display the political will necessary to ensure that we can arrive at agreement on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work, so that the Conference can resume its substantive work on the core issues on its agenda — nuclear disarmament, a treaty banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices, the prevention of an arms race in outer space and effective international arrangements for assuring non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons — in accordance with its mandate and its rules of procedure.

Pending the adoption of such a programme of work, structured and result-oriented discussions should be encouraged in the Conference. In that regard, we welcome the structured and substantive discussions held in the Conference throughout this year's session. We urge all the States concerned to live up to their responsibilities and make every effort to overcome the long-lasting impasse in the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. Rowland (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom aligns itself with the statement made earlier during this cluster on behalf of the European Union and its member States (see A/C.1/70/PV.18).

The United Nations disarmament machinery was the product of a shared determination to work collectively towards disarmament in its fullest sense. We need to work together, and not against one another, to ensure that the machinery maintains its relevance. We regret that the authors of some new draft resolutions this year have made no attempt to negotiate them and to accommodate those with differing concerns. The

United Kingdom, for example, has made clear its views on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons.

It is not a debate we shy away from. We engaged in last year's Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, held in Vienna, at which participants expressed a broad range of views. But we were one of the many States that felt that their views were not captured adequately in the Chair's summary in December. Submitting draft resolutions with a take-it-or-leave-it approach is not inclusive, and we very much hope that all States can rekindle their spirit of collaboration as we mark the seventieth anniversary of the formation of the United Nations. Over the years, we have demonstrated that we can make the greatest advances towards achieving our shared goals when we work together collectively.

The Conference on Disarmament (CD) is the main negotiating forum of the United Nations disarmament machinery. It has an agenda that enables the concerns of all States to be addressed. It includes all of the nuclear-weapon possessor States. It has a rule of consensus that should reassure States that they can enter into negotiations when an issue is ripe, safe in the knowledge that ultimately they can act to ensure that their legitimate national security interests are protected. If there are to be meaningful multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament, it is in the CD that they will take place.

We were disappointed that in the Disarmament Commission in April members did not seize the opportunity of the start of a new three-year cycle to revitalize the agenda, and that efforts supported by the United Kingdom to make modest reforms to the Commission by very slightly expanding its agenda were rejected. We run the risk of seeing a repeated three-year cycle with an agenda that has become too politicized at the expense of practical outcomes. As a discussion forum, the Disarmament Commission has a truly global membership. We should therefore make better use of it for the purposes for which it was established — discussing issues, finding common ground and making recommendations to the First Committee.

With the Disarmament Commission prevented from being a discursive forum, it is not surprising that discussions have moved to the Conference on Disarmament. For the second year running, the United Kingdom was pleased to coordinate structured informal

discussions on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, an item that could and should have been added to the Disarmament Commission's agenda. It is our belief that those discussions were valuable in identifying areas of common ground as well as differences of opinion. Furthermore, we believe that those discussions should continue, and should do so in the Conference on Disarmament, if they cannot take place at the Disarmament Commission.

We should all do everything we can to ensure the relevance of the Conference on Disarmament, since it is at the heart of our multilateral approach to disarmament issues. We welcome the work of the Group of Governmental Experts to make recommendations on possible aspects that could contribute to but not negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices and its report (see A/70/81). We once again call on all members of the Conference on Disarmament to engage in a constructive manner across the various regional and other groups. We must make a concerted effort to build an understanding on the key issues, including making progress towards a verifiable and internationally acceptable fissile material cut-off treaty, negotiated on the basis of document CD/1299 and the mandate it contains.

As we have said in our statements in earlier clusters, the United Kingdom remains ready and willing to work patiently and methodically to build trust between all States. We hope that others will show a similar willingness to engage constructively and collaboratively and put behind us the discordant and polarizing approach that we have noted here. Only then can we regain the sense of shared endeavour that originally established the disarmament machinery.

Mr. Mahfouz (Egypt): At the outset, Egypt associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/70/PV.18).

We would also like to reiterate our full support for the existing United Nations disarmament machinery, as established by the General Assembly at its first special session devoted to disarmament (SSOD-I). We reaffirm Egypt's long-standing commitment to nuclear disarmament through its work within its regional and broader groupings such as the League of Arab States, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Group of African States, the New Agenda Coalition and other partners

and relevant parties. We also recognize the important role played by non-governmental organizations and civil society in the field of disarmament.

While the Conference on Disarmament (CD) remains the sole multilateral negotiating body of the United Nations on disarmament, the absence of the political will needed to reach a balanced outcome that reflects the interests of all countries remains the main obstacle preventing the CD from adopting a balanced and comprehensive programme of work. The solution lies in addressing all the issues on the agenda of the Conference through an integrated approach that, most importantly, includes negotiations on nuclear disarmament and negative security assurances, on a treaty to ban fissile materials, including existing stockpiles for military purposes, and on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

Egypt has contributed to the efforts aimed at revitalizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament. We should mobilize every possible international effort with the goal of strengthening the CD's ability to deal effectively with disarmament issues both substantively and procedurally. We welcome any and all collective action on the part of Member States aimed at revitalizing the work of the Conference, as long as such efforts do not affect its rules of procedure or its priorities. Nuclear disarmament should remain the top priority, established as it was not only at SSOD-I but also according to the very first resolution adopted by the General Assembly in 1946. We call on the Conference on Disarmament to shoulder its responsibilities in that regard by launching negotiations on a universal convention prohibiting the possession, development or use of nuclear weapons.

Egypt also believes that there is a need for similar efforts to revitalize the Disarmament Commission as an integral part of the established disarmament machinery of the United Nations, especially considering that it has the potential to contribute substantively to disarmament machinery generally. Some key guidelines and norm-setting frameworks have evolved thanks to the Commission, including the guidelines adopted by consensus in 1999 on the establishment of nuclear weapon-free zones and aimed at creating a world free of nuclear weapons.

I would also like to note that as a voluntarily funded autonomous institute within the Organization, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) has enjoyed the sustained support of Egypt

as a contribution to realizing UNIDIR's research and training potential for furthering nuclear disarmament. We believe that the international community must preserve it as an impartial actor so as to enable it to continue generating ideas and promoting international action on disarmament and international security, specifically nuclear disarmament.

In conclusion, the importance of revitalizing the United Nations disarmament machinery requires our efforts to be collective, not individual; complementary, not contradictory and consensual, not divisive. We are hopeful that the First Committee, under your leadership, Sir, will be able to inject much-needed momentum into such efforts.

Mr. Denktaş (Turkey): Turkey shares the concerns about the lingering stalemate within the United Nations disarmament machinery. The Conference on Disarmament (CD), once a success story, has been dormant for too long. The same is true of the Disarmament Commission. However, in view of the range of security challenges facing the international community today, enhancing the effectiveness of the relevant institutions and mechanisms should be our shared goal and priority. And let us not lose confidence in what we have. We should keep in mind that in the past the disarmament machinery has succeeded in producing quite tangible outcomes. In our opinion, what the international community lacks today is political will on the part of some States. In the absence of the strong and shared political will we need to work for disarmament, the stalemate seems endless and progress a distant prospect.

Turkey believes that the problems preventing progress in the CD are not created by its procedures or internal dynamics. It does not operate in a void. The stalemate is a reflection of strategic bottlenecks at different but interrelated levels. We should refrain from assessing the CD's work in abstraction from all the other disarmament efforts. There can be no question that resuming substantive work in the CD, with the consent of all its member States, will contribute to the strengthening of international efforts for nuclear disarmament. We should spare no effort within the Conference, which has the potential to generate better mutual understanding and confidence, while at the same time not ignoring external developments. As we have said time and again in this forum, Turkey is convinced that the Conference possesses the mandate, rules of procedure and membership that it needs to

discharge its duties. Our highest priority should be enabling it to make progress by ensuring its resumption of its fundamental task, which is negotiating legally binding international treaties.

Another important pillar of the United Nations disarmament machinery that has not functioned as desired is the Disarmament Commission. Regrettably, it has been unable to submit any substantive recommendations to the General Assembly for the past 15 years. But again, despite its damaged status as a deliberative body, we should not forget that it was once able to successfully formulate consensus principles, guidelines and recommendations on a number of important subjects. We look forward to seeing the Commission resume that work again.

The First Committee, on the other hand, remains a significant component of the disarmament machinery, and Turkey values the importance of the introduction of draft resolutions. Nevertheless, we believe that we, the international community, should be careful that we do not create a self-imposed maze of duplication through the resolutions we draft and act on and be mindful of the absolute value that such resolutions add to disarmament efforts. We hope that our concern is shared by many members and look forward to discussions on how we can make the First Committee more efficient.

Mr. Galbavý (Slovakia): My delegation fully associates itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union (see A/C.1/70/PV.18). I would now like to add a few comments in my national capacity.

Slovakia continues to be concerned with the paralysis in the disarmament machinery and sees a pressing need for progress. The Conference on Disarmament (CD) has long been valued and recognized as a multilateral channel for strengthening international security. At the same time, the prolonged stalemate affecting the CD is unacceptable and unsustainable. We regret that, despite increased and concerted efforts, the CD once again failed this year to meet its obligation to establish a programme of work, thereby ignoring numerous demands by the international community for it to do so.

The CD should resume its work without any further delay. It is our responsibility to explore every avenue that could lead to substantive work being done in the CD. We are firmly convinced that a properly functioning CD is of fundamental importance and that it should be capable of fulfilling its mandate as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum.

The schedule of activities adopted by the Conference on Disarmament for its 2015 session led to substantive, intensive and high-quality exchanges. The re-establishment of the informal working group charged with producing a programme of work provided the opportunity for close examination of a number of considerations that should be further explored in the course of the next year. However, we have to keep in mind that informal negotiations cannot replace substantive discussions. That is why the immediate commencement of the substantive work of the Conference on Disarmament, including the start of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, remains our priority.

My delegation also pays due attention to many countries' expressed desire and interest in joining the membership of the Conference on Disarmament. We believe that this issue deserves proper consideration. In this regard, Slovakia welcomes increasing support for appointing a special coordinator on the expansion of the CD membership.

We have been advancing views in support of moving the disarmament agenda to other forums because of the continuing impasse in the CD. We are convinced that the Conference on Disarmament is still the best setting for producing global, well-founded and viable instruments and remains the sole multilateral forum charged with the negotiation of universal disarmament treaties whose legitimacy was conferred by the 1978 special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Slovakia stands ready to work with all partners with a view to bringing the CD deadlock to an end and to take multilateral disarmament negotiations forward.

We deeply regret that the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was not able to achieve consensus on its final document. This turn of events deepened frustration among the States and underscored a lack of confidence that exists within the non-proliferation regime. We need to work together and focus on finding a consensus in order to take our multilateral efforts forward. However, these efforts should not lead to ignoring, omitting or even bypassing the established and relevant disarmament and non-proliferation forums.

We should keep in mind that despite many differences we remain united by a common goal and bound by a shared vision of achieving and maintaining a world free of nuclear weapons. This should be the guiding principle in our upcoming efforts aimed at restoring the trust and credibility of the non-proliferation regime with the NPT as its cornerstone. We need to advance on the full implementation of all commitments and undertakings in this area as a vital element and the main tool for achieving our shared goal.

In this context, we strongly believe that the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty would certainly generate a much-needed impetus towards this end. Furthermore, it would be beneficial to efficiently and effectively utilize the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) in New York as one of the well-established multilateral forums for promoting common disarmament efforts. The UNDC was designed as the main subsidiary body of the General Assembly for disarmament matters. In the past it proved its ability to play an important and universal role by adopting a number of guidelines and recommendations. Although since 1999 it has been unable to properly fulfil its mandate and has failed to agree on any recommendation to the General Assembly, strong potential, determination and resolve on the part of its universal membership are evident and clearly present and as such should be fully utilized. Achieving a consensual outcome in the UNDC by the end of its current three-year cycle in 2017 would be a great boon and a much-needed impetus in our broader multilateral efforts.

Finally, we would like to underline the importance of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament (UNIDIR) and express our gratitude for its work during the 35 years of its existence. There is great value in UNIDIR as a research institute. As an autonomous body it is able to provide an important service by carrying out independent analysis. UNIDIR played an important role in the past, and we hope that its current problems will be overcome so that it may also continue its work in future.

Mr. Mendonça e Moura (Portugal): We fully align ourselves with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/70/PV.18). I would like to a few points of particular relevance to my country, Portugal.

In 1978, the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament established an integrated system of deliberative and negotiation bodies aimed at pursuing collective international efforts on disarmament, non-proliferation and arms-control issues — key factors in creating an environment of peace and security for all the nations and peoples of the world. In 2015, and for more than a decade, the main parts of this integrated system have been clearly failing to accomplish their respective mandates, to the great disappointment of all of us who believe that multilateralism, dialogue and collective political will are crucial and irreplaceable in dealing with all international processes, naturally including those related to security and disarmament.

The world has changed since 1978. Concerns and challenges related to security and disarmament issues have not diminished, but the major parts of the United Nations disarmament machinery have simply not been able to fulfil their respective mandates, and all persistent efforts of the General Assembly to revitalize its functioning and efficiency have, as of today, proved to be unsuccessful.

It is high time we accepted reality. The stalemate in the United Nations Disarmament Commission and in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) is due not only to matters related to procedure, but also to the prevailing lack of political will. With respect to the Disarmament Commission, I would like to commend the strenuous efforts made by its two most recent Chairs, Ambassadors Vladimir Drobnyak of Croatia and Fodé Seck of Senegal. We hope that their efforts aimed at revising the Commission's methods of work and at expanding the agenda items for discussion will succeed in the near future.

On other hand, and with respect to the Conference on Disarmament, it is crystal clear to us that one of the most basic United Nations principles — namely, the right of all interested States to take part in all United Nations forums devoted to global concerns — has been overlooked and violated for 16 years. It is simply no longer acceptable that a negotiating body be reserved for a select group of a few countries, not taking into due account the reiterated and more than justified interest of others in becoming parties to the Conference. As I said previously, Portugal strongly believes that the pursuit of a solid and lasting international peace and security environment clearly requires a non-discriminatory and inclusive approach to international disarmament, arms-

control and non-proliferation international goals and mechanisms.

We urge the Conference on Disarmament to address its expansion in a serious and consistent manner, thereby abiding by its own rules of procedure, namely, Section I, rule 2. We regret that the appointment of a special rapporteur charged with examining the expansion modalities of the CD without prejudice to the outcome has not yet taken place. In this regard, we are grateful for the efforts undertaken by a number of States that have assumed the rotating presidency of the CD, most recently, Mexico and the Netherlands.

In the current context in which the CD finds itself, marked by a long-lasting deadlock, a concrete decision on membership could provide a fresh impetus to the entire internal process. It could demonstrate that the CD is still able to reach consensus, responding to the requests of membership from States which, by so requesting, are stating how much they value the Conference as the dedicated United Nations forum for broad disarmament negotiations. The fact that numerous States continue to affirm their interest in joining the CD should be seen and adequately considered as a precious and timely political statement in support of the role of the Conference. In this respect, I would like to recall the broad support enjoyed by the Joint Statement on the Enlargement of the Conference on Disarmament presented earlier today by the Permanent Representative of Latvia on behalf of 73 States, including 21 members of the CD.

As things stand now, the CD runs the serious risk of being known for its long-standing inability to accomplish its mandate, rather than for its past achievements. The Conference's credibility is clearly marred by its immobility and the ineffectiveness of its ritual functioning. This situation could endanger its standing as the sole United Nations body devoted to negotiating international disarmament instruments. If not conscientiously addressed, the situation could open the way for discussions on alternative or parallel ways of achieving its assigned ends. Let me be clear. Portugal is not in favour of circumventing existing bodies, but we also strongly believe that those bodies should, in order to be allowed to survive, respond efficiently and in an inclusive manner to the needs and responsibilities they are set up to address and assume.

In conclusion, I would like to commend the very valuable work being done by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs in assisting States to pursue the

multilateral disarmament agenda and salute its former head, Ms. Angela Kane, whose very able leadership is now being furthered by Mr. Kim Won-soo.

Ms. Ouazzani (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): The Moroccan delegation aligns itself with the statements made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of Arab States (see A/C.1/70/PV.18).

Morocco remains deeply convinced of the relevance of the United Nations mechanisms devoted to disarmament and international security. The establishment of a world free of nuclear weapons imperatively depends on the efficiency of these mechanisms, particularly the Conference on Disarmament. Nevertheless, the enhanced effectiveness of these mechanisms rests upon the political will of States and the fulfilment of the obligations and commitments they have undertaken.

Since its inception, the Conference on Disarmament has succeeded in making itself the sole multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament and an important body where States can voice their positions. The lethargy which the CD has shown for more than a decade now is in strict contrast with developments in the international situation, including the new security challenges the world faces, and has been undermining the achievement of its ultimate goal, namely, general and complete disarmament. We agree with the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters finding that the CD's problems, which seem to be questions of form, are actually political in nature. Morocco urges the CD to adopt without delay a programme of work that would allow it to re-engage with its mandate and role, namely, conducting negotiations on disarmament.

Our delegation stands ready to examine in a constructive spirit any proposal or initiative that would revitalize disarmament mechanisms and relaunch the disarmament process. Morocco remains firmly attached to the integrity and mandate of the Conference on Disarmament. In the same vein, the First Committee is called upon to undertake discussions on ways that would lead to increased effectiveness in its work. Our delegation, which has submitted several proposals in this regard, will actively contribute to the informal consultations that you, Mr. Chair, intend to undertake in the current session.

Morocco regrets that the Disarmament Commission has, since 1999, been unable to agree on any recommendations. Member States should show

flexibility and political will in order to facilitate agreements within the Commission. We should all take advantage of the Commission's mandate as a deliberative body to consider all proposals on disarmament. No approach or process should be excluded from consideration because, for us, that is the spirit of the Commission's mandate. Morocco, which chairs the working group on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons, welcomes the spirit that prevailed at the first session and, with the support and cooperation of all Member States, will spare no effort to bring about an agreement on recommendations.

Morocco calls for launching a working group on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament as soon as possible. The special session should come up with an overall diagnosis of the United Nations disarmament mechanisms, agree on solutions to the systemic problems of these mechanisms, and strengthen their operational efficiency. The special session should also undertake an evaluation of the degree of implementation of the priorities established by the 1978 special session and renew and strengthen the universal consensus on disarmament issues. A renewed consensus on disarmament should take into account not just the developments since 1978, including the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the

Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, but also the need to strengthen and complement existing instruments and the existence of nuclear-weapon States that are not subject to any legal obligation on disarmament.

The Chair: We have heard the last speaker on the disarmament machinery cluster.

I give the floor to the representative of the United States of America.

Mr. Buck (United States of America): My delegation just has a question for the Secretariat with regard to the oral statements on programme and budget implications (PBIs). Many delegations, of course, take PBIs into consideration in arranging their positions, so we would appreciate any updates on when we might expect to receive them.

The Chair: I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Nakano (Secretary of the Committee): Within the Secretariat, we have been pushing the Budget Office to provide information as quickly as possible. The Committee Secretariat is painfully aware of the importance of providing that information to all delegations at an early stage. As soon as the information is received we will put it on QuickFirst.

The meeting rose at 4.10 p.m.