

Conference on Disarmament

English

Final record of the one thousand three hundred and seventy-second plenary meeting

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President: Mr. Peters Omologbe Emuze (Nigeria)

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The President: I call to order the 1372nd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I welcome you all to the second plenary meeting of the 2016 session of the Conference. As I have indicated to the other Presidents of this session and to the coordinators of the regional groups, my intention today is first to give the floor to countries who wish to make a general statement. After this, I will invite delegations to share their views and expectations concerning this year's programme of work in an open and frank manner. It is my hope that this discussion will enable me to present a draft programme of work that will enjoy the consensus of all delegations and could be adopted as soon as possible.

Before going into the debate, there are a few formal issues we need to address. Last week we adopted our agenda for the 2016 session. It has been issued as document CD/2052. We also invited three States to participate as non-members in the work of the Conference in accordance with rules 32 to 36 of our rules of procedure. Since our last plenary meeting, we have received requests from five delegations wishing to participate in our work as non-member States. The list is before you as document CD/WP.593/Add.1. Are there any comments on these requests? May I take it that the Conference decides to invite these States to participate in our work in accordance with the rules of procedure?

It was so decided.

The President: Allow me to suspend the meeting for a brief moment in order to allow the representatives of non-member States who have just been invited to participate in the work of the Conference to take their seats in the Council Chamber.

The meeting was briefly suspended.

The President: At this time, I would like to turn to the list of speakers for today. As mentioned earlier, some delegations have requested to make a general statement. The following delegations have requested to take the floor: Ireland, Belarus, the Netherlands, Malaysia and Turkey. I now give the floor to the representative of Ireland, Ambassador O'Brien.

Ms. O'Brien (Ireland): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on the assumption of your role and to ensure you of my delegation's full cooperation and support in your important and challenging task. Ireland would like to add some remarks in a national capacity to those to be delivered on our behalf by the European Union.

This is a pivotal time for disarmament. Looking back over the past year, there have been some significant successes from multilateral diplomacy, including the ground-breaking climate change agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals. The example of these international agreements, together with the agreement on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with Iran, clearly demonstrates the capacity for persistent and creative diplomacy to deliver results even in the most intractable circumstances.

Likewise, the early entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty and the successful first conference of States parties held last year in Mexico provide other examples of a successful disarmament process. These were brought forward together by States and civil society and show what the international community can achieve when we work together in good faith and in pursuit of the good of humanity. But 2016 is a new year. We all hope it will bring new impetus to the Conference on Disarmament. As do all delegations in this room, we deeply regret the fact that the Conference has been unable to achieve consensus over a programme of work in the past two decades.

We believe that too much time has been spent in this forum focusing on divisions and that not enough emphasis has been placed on what brings us together. It is more than

timely to do so now, in an era when the global disarmament regime, including the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), faces both challenges and opportunities. There are many issues on which we are all like-minded. We are all seriously committed to the goal of nuclear disarmament, even if our view of the path to that goal is sometimes at variance. We share the vision of a sustainable future recently endorsed by our leaders, as well as a commitment to the United Nations instruments seeking gender equality and equal agency for women.

In this respect, Ireland firmly believes that due consideration ought to be given to the gendered impact of weapons as well as the need for women to be empowered in disarmament and non-proliferation forums and negotiations. Ireland in particular commends the efforts of the Netherlands within the Conference in this regard. We all share strong concerns in relation to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The United Nations Secretary-General's message here in this chamber last week very clearly highlighted the nightmare scenario of non-State actors gaining access to such weapons. Ireland strongly supports the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, including in its essential work in Syria. We also support the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and are looking forward to a good review conference which will lead to strengthened implementation for the treaty. We were pleased to support the United States paper on national measures presented at the fourteenth Meeting of States Parties in that regard.

This body has, as many have rightly recognized, already achieved much, though regrettably the list of achievements has not been added to in almost two decades. There is no more time to lose. Innovative ideas, risk-taking and the political will to engage in meaningful discussions, and subsequently in negotiations, are needed. In the light of the mindful challenges as well as opportunities that disarmament is faced with, the Conference cannot afford to lose any more time. We call upon all member States to spare no effort to ensure that the Conference reasserts itself as a significant negotiating component of the United Nations disarmament machinery.

Ireland would wish to see progress on the long-stalled process leading to a fissile material treaty (FMT) and will support all efforts to obtain movement in this respect, including the timely United States initiative for a programme of work on the basis of document CD/1864 as amended to include stockpiles of fissile material in the negotiation mandate. The negotiation and conclusion of such a treaty would halt the quantitative development of nuclear weapons. It would, however, not necessarily halt a qualitative improvement in nuclear weapons. The stark evidence of the long-term effects of nuclear-weapon testing makes it all the more important that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty enters into force as a matter of urgency. We therefore call upon the remaining States to ratify this treaty at the earliest opportunity. The nuclear test carried out recently by North Korea is a matter of serious concern for us all. The Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Ireland, Charles Flanagan, has said that the test draws into sharp focus the urgent need for engagement on nuclear disarmament by all stakeholders and has urged the North Korean authorities to cease all nuclear testing and to re-engage with the Six-Party Talks.

Ireland believes that the NPT has reached a critical point and that the international community as a whole must rededicate and recommit itself, in words and in actions, to effective multilateral and verifiable nuclear disarmament. This is not an aspiration, but an urgent imperative. Without prejudice to the Conference's role as the sole standing multilateral forum for disarmament negotiations, the new open-ended working group provides us with the opportunity, and a clear mandate, to engage and to work towards this shared goal. Those of you present in last week's organizational meeting heard the call for inclusive and broad participation. This is a chance to have focused and substantive discussions in a flexible, inclusive and responsive format — something we are missing in

other disarmament forums. This is also an opportunity for us to demonstrate real leadership, courage and imagination.

Ireland strongly values the contribution of civil society to the debate on disarmament. It is regrettable that the members of this Conference are not able to benefit fully from their expertise in a more systematic and dynamic way.

Finally, let me conclude by saying that it is the firm belief of Ireland that the goal of disarmament is one that is generally shared by States. Because of this, I would like to reiterate my Government's strong belief that this Conference ought to expand its membership. There are United Nations Member States that applied over three decades ago for membership of this august body — United Nations Member States that have played an important role in the field of disarmament. We do believe that the time has come for this Conference to have the benefit of their experience and expertise — not merely as observers, but as full and equal members. Ireland stands ready to support any initiative aimed at furthering substantive consultations to this purpose, as well as any proposal which would amount to a real and substantive review of the Conference's membership.

The President: I thank the representative of Ireland for her statement and her kind words addressed to the President. I now give the floor to the representative of Belarus, Ambassador Ambrazevich.

Mr. Ambrazevich (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): Mr. President, since my statement is the first by the Belarusian delegation, I would like to congratulate you on your election. On behalf of the Belarusian delegation, I wish everyone a successful and fruitful session of the Conference on Disarmament.

Belarus recognizes the need to resume substantive work at the Conference. We call on all members of the Conference to work together in order to achieve the consensus needed for a breakthrough in our work.

The Belarusian delegation considers that the following lay a good foundation for the resumption of the negotiation process at the Conference in 2016: the President's proposal on the establishment of a programme of work for the 2010 session (document CD/WP.559), the outcome document of the high-level meeting on revitalizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament held during the sixty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly and the outcome document of the high-level meeting on nuclear disarmament held during the sixty-eighth session of the Assembly.

It is our view that the Conference must remain the principal multilateral negotiating forum in the field of disarmament and arms control. Its mandate must not be eroded by the formation of separate negotiation tracks with limited membership.

The Belarusian delegation agrees on the need to begin substantive work on the basis of proposals that enjoy consensus among the member States.

The President: I thank the representative of Belarus for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the President. I now give the floor to the representative of the Netherlands, Mr. Kos.

Mr. Kos (Netherlands): Mr. President, I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The following countries align themselves with this statement: the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Serbia, Albania, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia.

Let me first congratulate you, Mr. President, on the assumption of the post as the first President of the Conference on Disarmament during its 2016 session. We will fully support you in your efforts to achieve a successful start to this session. We would like to

take this opportunity to thank all the previous Presidents for their untiring efforts during the past year.

We take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General of the United Nations for his message to the Conference, delivered by the Acting High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, and for his commitment to and interest in the work of the Conference. We heard again his urgent appeal to the Conference to start long overdue negotiations. We will work to see effective follow-up to that appeal.

We strongly support the United Nations and effective multilateralism. The role and contribution of the United Nations disarmament machinery, the components of which are mutually reinforcing, are crucial and irreplaceable. Recent positive developments in the field of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, such as the historic agreement in July 2015 between China, France, Germany, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States (E3/EU plus 3) and Iran on a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and reaching its implementation day on 16 January 2016, demonstrate that deliberations and negotiations in these fields can produce concrete results. The successful outcome of the first Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, held in Cancun in August 2015, is also to be highlighted.

The adoption of a programme of work will require sustained political efforts from all Conference members. We should spare no efforts to bring the Conference back on track and remain open to any new initiatives that command consensus. We will work with you, Mr. President, to achieve this objective and urge all member States of the Conference to engage constructively to this end.

For the European Union, the immediate commencement and early conclusion of the negotiation in the Conference on Disarmament of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, on the basis of document CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein, remains a clear priority. We call on all member States of the Conference to start negotiations on such a treaty without delay and to begin work on the other issues on the agenda in line with the adopted programme of work (CD/1864). We call on all States possessing nuclear weapons that have not done so to declare and uphold an immediate moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

We welcome the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. It reflects the views expressed and identifies areas of convergence and divergence on key aspects of a treaty. The report should serve as useful guidance in bringing the Conference closer to future negotiations on this important issue. All European Union member States supported United Nations General Assembly resolution 70/39, submitted by Canada, on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other explosive devices.

We would like to reiterate the long-standing commitment of European Union member States to the enlargement of the Conference. We underline the importance of furthering substantive consultations on the expansion of its membership and strongly support having a formal discussion on this issue, as requested by the observer States, and the appointment of a special coordinator in this respect.

We welcome enhanced interaction between civil society and the Conference, and we hope that further steps towards a broadened contribution of NGOs and research institutions, in an inclusive manner, to the work of the Conference can be taken in the future.

The European Union regards the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, the essential foundation for the

pursuit of nuclear disarmament in accordance with article VI of the NPT and an important element in the further development of nuclear energy applications for peaceful purposes. A key priority for the European Union is to uphold and preserve the NPT as a multilateral instrument for reinforcing international peace, security and stability and strengthen its implementation. The universalization of the NPT is of critical importance: the European Union calls upon States that have not yet done so to join the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States without delay or conditions. While regretting that it was not possible to reach consensus on a final document at the 2015 Review Conference and bearing in mind the current severe security environment, we reiterate the strong support of the European Union for all three pillars of the Treaty and call for the implementation of all commitments assumed under it or undertaken during previous Review Conferences.

The European Union stands ready to contribute actively to the objectives of the peaceful use of outer space and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Recalling the European Union proposal for an international code of conduct for outer space activities, we continue to believe that responsible spacefaring nations as well as those who aspire to become spacefaring nations should endeavour to agree on key principles in order to preserve outer space as a global common good. We hope that all nations would render their support to such a step, with a shared sense of urgency and responsibility for preserving outer space for peaceful use by all humankind.

In conclusion, let me recall that, in response to the announcement by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that it had conducted a nuclear test, European Union High Representative Federica Mogherini stressed, in her statement of 6 January 2016, that such an action represents a grave violation of that country's international obligations not to produce or test nuclear weapons, as determined by several United Nations Security Council resolutions, and a threat to the peace and security of the entire North-East Asia region.

The European Union condemns in the strongest possible terms this irresponsible act. It is a further major violation by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of United Nations Security Council resolutions 1718, 1874, 2087 and 2094 and its obligations under the NPT. It is also a serious breach of the international non-proliferation regime and of the nuclear test moratorium which has become a de facto international norm. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is the only State to have conducted nuclear tests in the twenty-first century. The European Union will be in contact with its partners to discuss appropriate measures to build a firm and unified response aimed at demonstrating to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that there are serious consequences for continued violations of United Nations Security Council and International Atomic Energy Agency resolutions. The European Union urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comply with all its international obligations fully, unconditionally and without delay to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and to abandon its nuclear weapons programme, including its uranium enrichment programme, in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner.

In this context, I would also like to mention that, in view of the twentieth anniversary of the signature of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the European Union adopted and is working on the implementation of the action plan in support of the Treaty and its entry into force. We call upon all States that have not yet done so, especially annex 2 States, to ratify the Treaty as soon as possible.

The President: I thank the representative of the Netherlands for his statement on behalf of the European Union and for the kind words addressed to the President. I now give the floor to the representative of Malaysia, Mr. Rastam.

Mr. Rastam (Malaysia): Let me first congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. Our delegation deeply

appreciates the efforts and consultations that you have undertaken thus far. Let me assure you of the cooperation and support of Malaysia in your endeavours to move the Conference forward and begin substantive work in 2016. We also thank the Secretary, Mr. Kalbusch, the secretariat and all past Presidents of the Conference, and we would also like to welcome Madam Soliman to Geneva.

Malaysia remains concerned about the current state of affairs in the Conference. The Conference has not produced any substantive work for far too long. Despite numerous efforts in the past years, the atmosphere in the Conference continues to remain the same. There has not been political will, nor has there been genuine progress. What there has been is a rollback of trust, confidence and the ability of the Conference to uphold its mandate and to live up to the claim that it is the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community. While the Conference remains the same, progress has been made outside. Among others, the Arms Trade Treaty has progressed considerably, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons has moved forward and the General Assembly has approved the creation of an open-ended working group here in Geneva. Moreover, the humanitarian initiative for nuclear weapons is in the mainstream of nuclear disarmament discourse.

It has often been said that the Conference cannot work in a vacuum and that it needs to take into account due strategic and security considerations. True, but the Conference has, in fact, behaved as if it is in a vacuum and that the views of a large majority of States — both within and outside — do not matter for progress. Moreover, arguments on strategic and security considerations have been used to impede and block progress on many issues. Malaysia recognizes that there are different priorities with regard to the issues to be negotiated in the Conference. We look forward to engaging constructively to pursue agreement on, and implementation of, a programme of work that is progressive.

We are of the view that it is vital for member States to exercise flexibility and to have the political will to rejuvenate this body. A programme of work needs to be comprehensive and balanced yet able to lead to tangible outcomes and to move forward on issues where possible, while allowing continued engagement on other issues. Working together and demonstrations of flexibility and compromise need to be reciprocated. The priority of Malaysia remains nuclear disarmament. We recognize that progress can be made on the issue of fissile materials. Negative security assurances is a further issue where progress is possible, and we take note that officially there are no delegations which oppose work on this specific topic. Too much is going on outside the Conference for business in here to remain the same. The informal working group should not be seen as a rival to the Conference. Its work complements ours and it is an opportunity to move forward. Participation in it is for all Member States of the United Nations; it is inclusive. All delegations should engage in that process actively and constructively. As we look forward to improving the Conference, history has proved that revisiting the working methods of the Conference has the potential to ease the way for substantive work. Re-examination of the working methods should not be focused solely on the consensus rule, which is a major concern for many delegations, including ours, but also on other ways and means to further improve the current methods of work in the Conference. Like any other international body, there is a need for the Conference to look anew into its working methods periodically in order to adapt.

With regard to discussions on expansion of the membership of the Conference and on the role that civil society can play in its work, Malaysia is prepared for such discussions. We value the contributions made by civil society in the field of disarmament. The efforts of civil society are important in generating support for nuclear disarmament, and the valuable inputs would enrich the work of the Conference and help to stimulate substantive

discussions. The Conference would benefit from the valuable insights and views, data and research that civil society has.

With regard to the nuclear tests by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 6 January this year, this constitutes a grave threat to regional and global peace and security. I recall the statement made by the Malaysian Minister for Foreign Affairs on 6 January, which strongly condemns the tests and urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to desist from conducting further tests and to comply fully with the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions.

While the Conference has been in limbo, the world has not waited for it, and it shall not wait for progress to be made on important issues. By continuing the status quo, the Conference is not playing its role and the international community has the right to express disappointment. In short, we have failed to deliver on expectations: we have to change this.

Let me conclude, Mr. President, by reaffirming the commitment of Malaysia to general and complete disarmament for weapons of mass destruction. My delegation remains ready to work with you and other members towards achieving a positive and successful outcome to the session of the Conference this year.

The President: I thank the representative of Malaysia for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the President. I now give the floor to the representative of Turkey, Ms. Kasnakli.

Ms. Kasnakli (Turkey): Mr. President, let me begin by congratulating you on the assumption of the first presidency of the Conference on Disarmament for this session. I wish you success in your endeavours to advance the work of the Conference. You can count on my delegation's support.

We also take this opportunity to thank you and the Secretary-General for his message to the Conference, delivered last week by the Acting High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, and for his interest in the work of the Conference.

As is very well known, the Conference is a unique platform bearing special responsibility for the disarmament and non-proliferation agendas. It is tasked with negotiating multilateral disarmament treaties. It is regrettable that this is the twentieth year that the Conference has not fulfilled its task. Once again, we call upon Conference members to strive to maintain the relevance of the Conference by resuming its negotiation mandate. In this regard, we hope that the Conference will resume substantive work this year. Thus, we call upon all Conference member States to show flexibility regarding a possible programme of work.

Although the Conference could not start negotiations last year, there were detailed and frank discussions under the schedule of activities. We also note that the informal working group on the programme of work yielded fruitful discussions.

We are of the opinion that our agenda is comprehensive and flexible, enabling us to address all issues in the field of arms control and disarmament. Our next step must be to agree by consensus on a programme of work. This will not only pave the way towards the commencement of negotiations on a fissile material treaty but will also help to materialize advances on other agenda items. These include substantive work on the core issues, namely, nuclear disarmament, prevention of an arms race in outer space and negative security assurances.

We welcome the consensus report of the Group of Governmental Experts on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other explosive devices. The report successfully outlined the essential questions regarding a future treaty.

The security situation overall has unfortunately deteriorated over the past years. As diplomats having considerable expertise in the field, we should not spare any efforts here within the framework of the Conference that would generate greater mutual understanding and confidence. It is neither realistic nor practical to ignore developments outside the Conference. Hence, we should think harder about how to break the ongoing deadlock. In this vein, we commend your efforts, Mr. President, in drafting a programme of work. We welcome any effort in search of a breakthrough that would command consensus.

The problems faced by the Conference are not created by its procedures, membership or internal dynamics. It is extremely unfortunate that there is a certain malaise throughout the disarmament forums and machinery. The Conference does not operate in a vacuum, and we need to see the larger picture in assessing its work.

Turkey is convinced that the Conference possesses the mandate, rules of procedure and membership to discharge its duties. In other words, if we have not yet reached the progress we strive for, it is not due to procedural issues.

Turkey supports the calls for systematic, progressive, verifiable and irreversible nuclear disarmament and encourages all States that possess nuclear weapons to take further practical steps in that direction. It was with this expectation that we took part in the 2015 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference, which in the end could not adopt a final consensus document. Notwithstanding this outcome, the 2010 action plan still constitutes clear guidance towards our goal. The good and healthy functioning of the NPT is a fundamental goal for us. Its universalization is of the utmost importance. We call upon States that have not yet done so to join the NPT as non-nuclear-weapon States without delay.

Turkey is concerned that the 1995 resolution on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction has yet to be implemented. It is disappointing that during the Review Conference it was not possible to reach an agreement on the matter. Turkey will continue to support constructive efforts in this direction.

We follow closely the various discussions regarding nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. While we are ready to discuss which practical steps will be more effective, it is of the utmost importance that neither the integrity of the NPT nor the disarmament machinery should be undermined.

The beginning of this year has already witnessed one positive and one negative development. Turkey has joined the statements made by the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative and by the Mexico, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Turkey and Australia (MIKTA) group read out last week at the opening of the Conference, respectively, by the Permanent Representatives of Germany and of Australia, on the recent nuclear test by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Turkey is gravely concerned by this development which will be bound to affect peace and stability in the region.

On a positive note, Turkey welcomes the announcement made on 16 January on the attainment of the implementation day of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action regarding the Iranian nuclear programme. Turkey has always considered diplomacy and negotiations as the only option in the resolution of the Iranian nuclear dossier. We congratulate all parties concerned that enabled this outcome which symbolizes the success of diplomacy. We expect the uninterrupted and full implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action in full transparency under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency. In this context, we would like to strongly emphasize the need for all parties concerned to demonstrate conduct that is responsible and that does not promote disassociation in the period ahead of us, to help re-establish security and stability in the region.

To conclude, let me reiterate our support to Nigeria and the future Presidents of this session. We wish you success.

The President: I thank the representative of Turkey for her statement and for the kind words addressed to the President. Would any other delegation like to take the floor? I give the floor to the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Mr. Jo Chol Su.

Mr. Jo Chol Su (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Mr. President, I have requested the floor to respond to the accusations and arguments made in disregard of the dependence of effect on cause.

Since we already made clear our position in our statement during the last plenary session with regard to the just measure for self-defence to defend the sovereignty of the country and the right of a nation to existence and to ensure peace on the Korean Peninsula and regional security, I will not take time to reiterate in detail the principled stand and peace-loving efforts of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. I have listened carefully to the previous statements containing biased views and allegations and am doubtful whether they are really intended to be helpful for global peace and security, including in the Korean Peninsula, or whether they deliberately ignore reality to take sides for political motives.

As is well known, in order for a doctor to treat a patient, the right prescription for an illness should be made out based on identifying the root cause as a result of an examination and not simply on the symptoms. The incorrect and misled prescriptions produced by thoughtlessness and ignorance may generate the adverse effect of either worsening the condition or endangering the life of the patient. There is no ready-made solution applicable to all cases. For that reason, the same modality should be applied for better understanding the nuclear issue in the Korean Peninsula. It would be desirable that, before making any judgment or blindly taking one side, an objective and impartial assessment of the situation in the Korean Peninsula should be made in order to draw conclusions and propose potential or possible recommendations that can truly be helpful towards attaining the goal of peace and security, should anyone be concerned enough or sincerely look forward to peace and security in the Korean Peninsula and the region.

The reality of the long-standing stalemate that the Conference on Disarmament has been facing in this chamber for almost two decades clearly proves that, without confidence and trust, as well as political will to cooperate with each other, genuine progress and success will remain only as something anticipated. The persistence of unilateral views unacceptable to others and the act of shuffling responsibilities with others will only bring about endless controversy, contribute to heightening tensions and confrontation and will never benefit future development.

The President: I thank the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for his statement. Would any other delegation like to take the floor? That does not seem to be the case. Please allow me now to brief you on the consultations I have had so far on the programme of work.

From my consultations so far and given the inability of the 2015 session of the Conference on Disarmament to reach a consensus on the programme of work, I consulted the six countries holding the presidency last year, the six countries that will preside this year, regional blocs and individual countries. Some countries favoured the constitution of an informal working group and some favoured an informal debate on the four core issues, inviting different delegations to openly share their views on the way forward. There were also those who supported an informal working group but they called for the need for equal and balanced treatment of all core issues. A few others did not support this position, believing that an informal working group would not yield any tangible results. A good

number of States are pushing for a balanced programme of work. I have received two draft programmes of work but we have not been able to circulate them as we need to consult the suggestions and positions of delegations. However, I have not been dissuaded but encouraged by the shared voice of many delegations who feel that the Conference must break the logjam that has stopped negotiations in nuclear disarmament for many years. My presidency feels that the way forward is to have an open discussion on the programme of work in plenary, believing that in the end the cross-fertilization of ideas arising from these open discussions will provide us with a road map to prepare a draft programme of work. That is the current status of my consultations on a programme of work.

I would now like to invite all delegations to share their views regarding our programme of work. As I noted earlier, your contributions will be most valuable in assisting me to prepare a draft programme of work that can find a consensus in this Conference.

I give the floor to the representative of Pakistan, Ambassador Janjua.

Ms. Janjua (Pakistan): Thank you, Mr. President, and I would like also to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Michael Møller, who is present here today, and look forward to his continued presence and participation in the Conference.

I delivered a statement last week at the opening plenary meeting of the 2016 session of the Conference on Disarmament broadly outlining my delegation's views on Conference-related issues. We had also offered some concrete and practical suggestions for moving forward the Conference's agenda. In response to your call to address the issue of the programme of work during today's plenary meeting, I wish to state the following.

Mr. President, firstly I would like to thank you for the consultations you have held and for this opportunity for the Conference to have an open discussion on the programme of work. The vast majority of Conference members support substantive work on nuclear disarmament, negative security assurances and the prevention of an arms race in outer space, yet certain Powers are only prepared to advance a partial non-proliferation measure in the Conference in the form of a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). An FMCT that does not address the vast production of fissile material, especially the regional and global asymmetry in fissile material stockpiles, is not acceptable to my delegation due to its negative implications for our security. It is also not acceptable to many others because of its limited scope and marginal contribution to nuclear disarmament.

The reasons for the strong positions taken by different Conference members on the commencement of negotiations on various issues, including nuclear disarmament, an FMCT, the prevention of an arms race in outer space and negative security assurances, are substantive and based on their respective national security concerns. These are serious factors that cannot be resolved by drafting language, no matter how creative. Drafting language and procedural innovations cannot solve a substantive problem that involves national security concerns. What is needed is genuine political will to build consensus-based, cooperative and non-discriminatory approaches that lead to equal and undiminished security for all.

We acknowledge the responsibility of the Conference President in accordance with rule 29 of the rules of procedure to draw up a programme of work for consideration and adoption by the Conference. Recognizing the daunting nature of this task, we feel that this responsibility can be delegated to an informal working group to search for a consensus-based formula in an open and transparent manner. The adoption by consensus of the informal working group's report last year was a significant achievement. We need to build on that success and explore further incremental progress through the re-establishment of an informal working group with a similar mandate again this year. At the same time, a schedule of activities providing for informal discussions on all agenda items would also be

highly useful to debate the substantive issues and better understand each other's perspectives and concerns. I reiterate that my delegation is only promoting this so-called dual-track approach of an informal working group and a schedule of activities as a practical and pragmatic step. This is notwithstanding our readiness to join negotiations in the Conference on nuclear disarmament, negative security assurances and the prevention of an arms race in outer space, as well as on other issues outside the four core issues, such as cybersecurity, new types of destabilizing weapon systems and lethal autonomous weapons systems.

We also stand ready to join efforts in the Conference for arriving at a new negotiating mandate for a fissile material treaty that explicitly addresses the asymmetry in fissile material stockpiles and contributes to the goals of both disarmament and non-proliferation.

To summarize, my delegation is not in a position to accept a programme of work that includes a negotiating mandate for Conference negotiations either on the basis of the Shannon mandate or any other basis that does not explicitly cover the existing stocks of fissile materials in the treaty scope. The proposal recently put forward — the one proposal that we know of, although you have spoken of two today — by one Conference member for a draft programme of work which does not address the issue of asymmetry in the fissile material holdings, therefore affecting our national security interests, does not have our support. We cannot entertain any ambiguity on this account.

My delegation, however, stands ready to positively consider a programme of work that either contains a discussion mandate for all issues without exception, or a negotiating mandate for nuclear disarmament, the prevention of an arms race in outer space and negative security assurances. My delegation is also ready to positively consider other issues for negotiation besides the Conference's four core issues, as stated earlier.

Finally, we would like to emphasize that the President should develop consensus among Conference members through extensive consultations before formally tabling any draft programme of work for the Conference's consideration.

While I have the floor, I would also like to address the open-ended working group that was established pursuant to United Nations General Assembly resolution 70/33, which was referred to earlier by some delegations.

1. Pakistan is committed to the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world, achieved through a universal, non-discriminatory, irreversible and verifiable process.
2. Pakistan supports the conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-weapons convention by the Conference on Disarmament that would prohibit the possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use of nuclear weapons and provide for their destruction. Such a convention can only be negotiated on the basis of consensus with the participation of all key stakeholders, i.e., the nuclear-weapon States, in a manner that leads to equal and undiminished security for all States. Abandoning these principles would amount to reneging on the principles agreed in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.
3. We understand and share the frustration at the slow pace of nuclear disarmament and the inability of the Conference to fulfil its *raison d'être*; but the solution to this situation does not lie in abandoning the Conference or in exploring progress outside the Conference on a non-consensual basis without the participation of key stakeholders.

Real progress can only be achieved by pursuing consensus-based, cooperative and non-discriminatory approaches that lead to equal and undiminished security for all. I would

also take this opportunity to thank my colleague, the Ambassador of Ireland, for bringing forth the important issue of gender impact on disarmament, as well as the participation of NGOs in the important work that we undertake here. We support that line of thought.

The President: I thank the representative of Pakistan for her statement. I recognize the representative of the United States, Ambassador Wood.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I think, as we heard during last week's plenary, States are very interested in hearing about some of the initiatives that have been put forward and I thank you, Mr. President, for informing us today that there is also a second initiative that you have been looking at. I think it would be very useful, frankly, were we to have some informal consultations outside of the chamber at this point to discuss these initiatives, as I know a number of States in this room have not actually been briefed — they have just heard some of the references to at least one initiative, and now as we have heard from you, there is a second. I think it would be very useful if you were to convene some informal consultations outside of the chamber, so that we can have a more fulsome discussion of what exactly these initiatives are.

The President: I thank the representative of the United States. I assure you that the two proposals are similar in content. At this stage would any other delegation like to take the floor? I recognize the representative of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Deyneko (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Mr. President, on behalf of the Russian delegation, I am pleased to welcome you as the first President of the 2016 session of the Conference on Disarmament.

The Russian delegation is convinced that there is no alternative to the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. We consider the idea of withdrawing issues from the Conference's agenda to transfer them to alternative forums extremely harmful. Experience has shown that such approaches produce texts that are only agreed upon by a select club infused with partiality and unable to claim universality. Global agreements on arms control are possible only on the basis of consensus, with the vital national security interests of all States as the common denominator. Consensus is not only possible but realistically achievable at the Conference on Disarmament, if we, as responsible participants in the Conference, demonstrate the necessary political will and together, step by step, move to overcome existing differences.

The Russian delegation is interested in the early resumption of negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament. In that regard, the Russian-Chinese draft Treaty on Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space and of the Threat or Use of Force against Outer Space Objects, updated to reflect suggestions from a large number of States, represents a good starting point. The Russian-Chinese initiative has the advantage of being about preventive disarmament, or the prevention of the emergence of yet another potential arena for armed confrontation. Furthermore, in our view, international legal guarantees against the deployment of weapons in outer space would strengthen strategic stability and help create the conditions required for further steps towards genuine nuclear disarmament.

As realists, we understand that achieving a legally binding ban on the placement of weapons in outer space will take time. A political commitment not to be the first to deploy weapons in outer space can fill the legal void during this period. The globalization of such a commitment would create a reliable safety net and would facilitate the maintenance of space as a place free from conflict and the arms race.

Although we consider the draft Treaty on Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space ripe for negotiating work, we do not intend to confine ourselves solely to the topic of the prevention of an arms race in outer space. As part of a comprehensive and balanced programme of work, we are ready to join efforts for a legally binding instrument

on negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States and, on the basis of previously agreed arrangements, on a fissile material cut-off treaty. A serious discussion on the issue of nuclear disarmament is overdue and should be based on a comprehensive approach, taking into account all factors affecting strategic stability.

Regarding the Conference's programme of work, the Russian delegation intends to make a constructive contribution. As you know, the United Nations General Assembly resolution on prevention of an arms race in outer space is adopted annually by an overwhelming majority, with two abstentions — that is, practically by consensus, since no one opposes it. In this regard, we are working on a proposal that seeks to translate the political agreement that exists within the General Assembly into the practical negotiating work of the Conference.

We hope that compromise will also be facilitated by the outcome of the informal working group on the programme of work, which met under the chairmanship of Finland and whose report enjoys the support of all delegations. That report outlines possible ways to overcome the current impasse, which will certainly be useful in our future activities.

Mr. President, you hold the great responsibility of setting the tone for the 2016 session. Permit me to assure you of our readiness to engage in constructive cooperation in the common interest of all participants in the Conference.

My statement has touched on only some of the issues relating to the activities of the Conference. In the course of the 2016 session, we will, of course, touch on other important aspects of its activities in our statements.

The President: I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for his statement. I now would like to call on the representative of China to take the floor. Ambassador Fu Cong, you have the floor.

Mr. Fu Cong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Mr. President, allow me first of all to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. The Chinese delegation will fully support you in your work.

I would like to take this opportunity to discuss my country's views on the Conference's programme of work. We believe that, in the light of the current situation, efforts to draft the programme of work should be founded on the following principles.

First is the principle that the programme of work should be fair and balanced. It should take on board the priorities and concerns of all parties in a balanced manner. A fissile material cut-off treaty is not the only agenda item that is ripe for discussion. In reality, negative security assurances, the prevention of an arms race in outer space and other agenda items are also quite ripe, and substantive discussions or negotiations on these items should be carried out as soon as possible.

The second principle is that of consensus. There is a long-standing, widespread consensus among all parties that the Shannon mandate should be used as the basis for negotiating a fissile material cut-off treaty, and that consensus should be upheld. To carelessly discard such a consensus would be tantamount to opening Pandora's box and would lead to a series of negative consequences. China will firmly maintain its position that the Shannon mandate is the basis for the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty, and that position will not waver.

The third principle is that of keeping up with the changing times. Over the past three decades, rapid scientific and technological progress has had a profound impact on the arms control and international security situation. And yet, in the Conference we continue to have the same agenda items that were established 30 years ago. This situation should be changed as soon as possible. We believe that, while it is important to continue to carry out work on

the conventional agenda items, it is time for the Conference to seriously evaluate the impact of scientific and technological development on strategic balance and stability and on the arms control process and to promptly begin work on new agenda items such as cybersecurity and lethal autonomous weapons.

The fourth principle is that of strengthened universality. Participation in international security governance is a joint responsibility of the international community as a whole. The Conference should open up its membership to more States in a timely manner so as to strengthen its universality. We believe that not only would an enlarged membership not obstruct the work of the Conference, it would inject new vitality into the Conference's work. It would also make starting from scratch outside the Conference seem even more meaningless.

Lastly, allow me to briefly address the subject of an open-ended working group on nuclear disarmament. China has always believed the Conference to be the ideal forum in which to address nuclear disarmament issues. On a matter such as nuclear disarmament, which is the core security concern of many States, it is of the utmost importance that we uphold the principle of consensus. Any attempt to abandon the Conference and the principle of consensus and to discuss nuclear disarmament without regard for the realities of the international security situation would be of no benefit to the international nuclear disarmament process.

The President: I thank the representative of China for his statement. Would any other delegation like to take the floor? I recognize the representative of India, Ambassador Varma.

Mr. Varma (India): We would like to thank you, Mr. President, for your continuing efforts to take forward the work of the Conference on Disarmament since, in this particular segment of plenary, you are collecting views on a possible programme of work for the Conference.

I would like only to recall that we had indeed in plenary made specific suggestions on 26 January, which was the first plenary of this session. We are very confident that you will take into account the suggestions of India along with other suggestions that have been made in seeing what the possibilities are for having a comprehensive and balanced programme of work. We are in your hands as to what you think is the best way forward. We agree with the comments made today that, unless there is a consensus, bringing a proposal to the formal plenary may not be an entirely productive exercise, but that does not preclude informal consultations in various formats — bilateral, regional or small groups — and we have every confidence that you will explore all these possibilities as we move forward.

We have not responded in plenary to any specific proposals made by others because we find ourselves in quite a strange situation, as we have had two occasions on which a delegation has expressed its opposition to a proposal that has not been made in plenary. Let us have a little more transparency in how we work, for the sake of clarity if not for anything else. We cannot take the Conference down the road of that very popular instrument in Greek drama involving the rejection of a proposal that was never made. We are very confident that you will take this forward, and we fully respect the positions of delegations to make proposals and to react to those proposals. However, I think it is necessary to have clarity on what it is that we are dealing with in terms of proposals and in terms of what is acceptable and what is not.

Secondly, I will briefly refer to the statement made by the representative from the delegation of the Netherlands on behalf of the European Union on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The position of India on the NPT is well known. We, of course, stated very clearly — and I wish to state it again today for the record — that there is no

question of India joining the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State. We do not bring up NPT issues in the Conference but, as it has been brought up today, we would like to respond because, in all good spirit, we would like to convey to our European Union representative that they would do well if they were to build support within the European Union for the long-term sustainability of the Treaty.

Thirdly, I would like to very briefly recall the suggestions which we had made last year — addressed to the secretariat — that we could look at ways of improving the Conference's website. We are very confident that the Conference secretariat is working on that particular aspect, and I am sure that they will come up, at some stage, with something as to what is possible on upgrading the public profile of the Conference.

Let me add another suggestion for the consideration of the Conference and the secretariat: maybe we could institute the tradition of having a common group photograph taken annually of the Conference. That would include member States, a number of non-member States who have expressed interest in the work of the Conference, the secretariat and, of course, any participants from the NGO community who wish to be photographed along with us. I am not sure that everybody shares that interest but, if there are such people, I think they should be most welcome. We would need to take a view on when it would be done. One suggestion is that it could be done at the last plenary of the first presidency of the Conference, which gives a bit of time for everyone to gather. There is also the more technical issue of how it can be done, which, of course, we will leave in the hands of our very capable secretariat. We would, of course, be very honoured if the Secretary-General of the Conference were to grace the photograph, which can be a physical record of the Conference at the beginning of every year and can be put on our website.

This is to add to making our work in the Conference more meaningful. It is a very small step, but I hope that it will meet with the support of yourself, Mr. President, the secretariat and the Conference as a whole.

The President: I thank the representative of India for his very kind words and suggestions which I have noted. I recognize the representative of the United States once again, Ambassador Wood.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I apologize for taking the floor once again, Mr. President, but I feel the need to respond to the comments that were made by the representative of the Russian Federation with regard to the draft Treaty on Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space and no first placement of weapons in outer space.

I am afraid that we have heard nothing new from the Russian Federation with regard to the draft Treaty on Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space, which — as we have said many times in this forum — does not include an integral legally binding verification regime for effectively monitoring compliance with its obligations, including its prohibitions. Furthermore, as we have stated previously, given the dual-use nature of many space systems, such as robotic arms, for example, the draft Treaty's definitions are insufficient to define what a weapon is, and it fails to address concerns about a potential breakout capability.

The so-called no-first-placement initiative of Russia contains a number of significant problems, including a lack of a viable definition of a space weapon and the fact that implementation of the no-first-placement declaration cannot be confirmed by others. Indeed, it does not meet the evaluation criteria for a space-related transparency and confidence-building measure established by consensus, and that includes Russia, in a United Nations-sponsored group of governmental experts study on such measures in outer space activities.

A brief review of document CD/2042, which was, as you will recall, the response by Russia and China to the United States analysis of the draft Treaty, reveals that they have not

convincingly addressed a number of fundamental concerns, including the verification problem. Russia argues that it is more useful to put aside the question of a verification protocol in order to reach consensus on a legal obligation in a legally binding instrument as soon as possible.

The United States remains convinced that it cannot support an approach in which key legally binding provisions required for effective verification would only be determined through subsequent negotiations of an additional protocol. Furthermore, Russia continues to try to excuse away the absence of terrestrial-based anti-satellite weapons in the draft Treaty with ill-founded arguments. Addressing terrestrial-based anti-satellite weapons would, of course, give rise to the same kinds of critical definitional and verification problems also associated with space-based weapons. However, Russia does not employ this argument and they have in any case dismissed such concerns with regard to space-based weapons. Instead, they argue that the draft Treaty's prohibition on use would mean that a State would have virtually no grounds for developing or using anti-satellite capabilities. But, if Russia truly believes that a ban on use would be enough to achieve such an outcome, then why does the draft Treaty address deployment of space-based weapons specifically, rather than simply proposing to ban their use?

Moreover, in defending the scope of the draft, Russia maintains that issues of arms control in outer space should be addressed gradually. Considering the merits of that argument, it is astonishing to us that they have not focused particularly on terrestrial-based anti-satellite weapons in the light of the fact that the testing and fielding of such systems represent the actual near-term threats to space security and sustainability, not least because of Russian activities. We can only conclude that this is because Russia actually intends to develop and maintain terrestrial-based anti-satellite systems.

My last point is that, frankly, space transparency and confidence-building measures offer a pragmatic, voluntary approach to addressing near-term concerns for space security and sustainability.

The President: I thank the representative of the United States. Would any other delegation like to take the floor? Once again, I have the representative of the Russian Federation, Ambassador Deyneko. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. Deyneko (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): To tell the truth, I am pleased by the response of the representative of the United States of America to my outlining of the two topics: the draft Treaty on Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space and the initiative on no first placement of weapons in outer space. What does this tell us? It tells us that the matter of outer space is more topical and relevant than ever, including at the Conference on Disarmament.

It is our understanding that, clearly, it would be in everyone's interest to move to negotiations on this crucial issue, without prejudice to the importance of remaining issues. I have a concrete proposal in that regard for the United States delegation: to show leadership and to respond with an initiative in turn, and to formulate and sign such a declaration with the Russian Federation. We are ready to do this. We already know how to monitor each other from our long history of joint treaties and agreements in the disarmament and arms control sphere. It is essential that there should be no repetition of the situation with the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty; that situation essentially gave rise to the complexities we now face in the field of arms control.

As I said in my statement — perhaps the interpretation was not quite accurate — I said that we are working on how to translate the practical, consensual political agreements of the United Nations General Assembly, set out in the relevant resolutions, to the arena of practical negotiating work at the Conference on Disarmament.

The President: I thank the representative of the Russian Federation, Ambassador Deyneko. Would any other delegation like to take the floor? That does not seem to be the case. I would now like to ask the secretariat to share with us some organizational information.

Mr. Kalbusch (Secretary of the Conference on Disarmament): I would briefly like to invite all delegations to regularly look in their mailboxes for new documents. We have now received from all delegations notes verbales with contact details; once that document is ready, it will be distributed in your mailboxes: please check that all the information is correct. We have already noticed that there is a problem with one or two e-mail addresses, and at least two delegations did not receive our communications. We would be grateful for your feedback on that.

I also wish to remind you that we have a generic e-mail address. Kindly send all correspondence, or copy all correspondence you have, to the secretariat through the e-mail address cd@unog.ch.

The President: Finally, we have a request from the delegation of China not to have a meeting during the celebration of the Chinese New Year. I understand that the celebrations start on Friday, 2 February 2016, and end on Thursday, 11 February 2016. I therefore invite the delegation of China to take the floor if they wish.

Mr. Fu Cong (China): Mr. President, I understood you to mean that next Tuesday there would be no meeting, but on Thursday there would be meetings. Is that understanding correct? If that is the case, we support the idea.

The President: Would any other delegation wish to take the floor on this subject, concerning the proposal by China that we should meet this Thursday, not meet next Tuesday and then meet again Thursday next week? I recognize the Ambassador of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Rowland (United Kingdom): A question: has China made this request of any other United Nations body here in Geneva or is this just a request to the Conference on Disarmament, and if so, why?

The President: I give the floor to the representative of China.

Mr. Fu Cong (China): We have been trying to say this in many other forums, but why the Conference on Disarmament first? We think of the Conference as a family, so we want to raise this issue with the family first to accommodate our request.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of the United States.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): Let me start by saying that the Lunar New Year is something that is celebrated around the world and I certainly appreciate its importance and significance. However, I think if we start making requests for certain bodies not to meet during a period of celebration, it will open a Pandora's box. I would then want to second that any time that there is a session that falls on the United States' Thanksgiving, we would like to have the Conference not meet on that day.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan.

Ms. Janjua (Pakistan): The point made by the Ambassador of the United States is true but, after all, 1 January is always a holiday for all of us, so we do not have to particularly ask for one in that regard. I think that the request being made is legitimate also because of the fact that they are asking for two meetings instead for the one day off: they are asking for a meeting on Thursday this week and Thursday next week. So, there are two meetings instead of the one meeting that we miss out on. I feel that it is a legitimate request and we can all celebrate the Chinese New Year with the Chinese delegation, I hope.

The President: I give the floor again to the representative of China.

Mr. Fu Cong (China): First, let me say that actually it is not only the Chinese delegation that celebrates Chinese New Year. I know that it is also a national holiday for other countries. This year is special because it falls on a Tuesday, and Tuesday we have the Conference. Actually, we do not have Conference plenaries every day of the week, even though we could. So, our only request is that we postpone next Tuesday's meeting or that we bring it forward. We do not have any hard feelings if other countries do not agree to this, but that is the basic rationale for our request. Another practical reason is that on Tuesday there will be a United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) seminar on cybersecurity, and I myself will be working on Tuesday by attending that seminar. I do not know if the Conference's Tuesday plenary is that sacrosanct; maybe we can just readjust the timetable.

This is simply our request — nothing special.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of the United States.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): Again, I would say that obviously we are in your hands, but if you do entertain this request, you are opening the door to future requests for similar types of requests. I would therefore ask that you take that into very serious consideration.

The President: If there is no other delegation that wishes to take the floor, I wish to inform you that we will communicate this decision in due course.

That concludes our business for today. The meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.