

Conference on Disarmament

English

Final record of the one thousand three hundred and eighty-first plenary meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 8 March 2016, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Steffen Kongstad (Norway)

The President: I call to order the 1381st plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Distinguished colleagues, as today's plenary falls on 8 March, I would like to start by extending my congratulations to everyone on the occasion of International Women's Day. Gender equality, equal opportunities and non-discrimination benefit us all. The theme for this year's International Women's Day is "Planet 50-50 by 2030: Step It Up for Gender Equality". Agenda 2030 has two key targets that are highlighted as especially relevant for today's celebration: ending all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere, and eliminating all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres. In addition to these, the overall inclusion and participation of women is essential, and that also relates to disarmament. We have seen some progress, notably through the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and related efforts to more effectively incorporate women in disarmament and arms control processes. However, recent research has showed that at any given intergovernmental meeting on disarmament, only about one quarter of participants are likely to be women and almost half of all delegations are likely to be composed entirely of men. Those are rather disappointing figures when we know that progress in disarmament, both generally and in specific initiatives, can be strengthened through the integration of gender insights into debate, decision-making and actions and through more equitable participation by women in decision-making. There is still some way to go, and the undertaking, alongside the many other aspects of disarmament, is certainly worthy of our efforts.

Distinguished colleagues, you have all received a copy of the letter from Ambassador Alexey Borodavkin of the Russian Federation addressed to the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, transmitting a draft proposal for a programme of work for the 2016 session of the Conference. The letter and the draft proposal were circulated by the secretariat at the request of the delegation of the Russian Federation. The Russian Federation also requested that it be issued as a Conference document. This means that we currently have four draft proposals for a programme of work before us: the proposal by the United States to amend paragraph 2 of document CD/1864, which the secretariat circulated by e-mail on behalf of the President on 4 February 2016; the proposal for a programme of work circulated by Nigeria during its presidency and issued as document CD/WP.594; the draft proposal circulated by the delegation of the United Kingdom and issued as document CD/2055; and the draft proposal circulated by the delegation of the Russian Federation and issued as document CD/2057. I invite you to informal open-ended consultations on the circulated proposals on a programme of work this afternoon at 3 p.m. in room IX at the Palais des Nations.

Now, I would like to turn to the list of speakers for today. The delegation of the Russian Federation has requested to take the floor. I now give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation, Ambassador Alexey Borodavkin.

Mr. Borodavkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to begin by joining others in offering congratulations to the world's women. Today, 8 March, we celebrate International Women's Day, and I would like to wish them all the best.

The Russian delegation is presenting today, for consideration by the Conference on Disarmament, a draft programme of work. This draft was prepared on the basis of the initiative for the development in the Conference of a convention for the suppression of acts of chemical terrorism, which was put forward by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Mr. Sergei Lavrov, on 1 March 2016. The adoption of this programme of work will allow us not only to add to the international community's arsenal a new weapon with which to suppress terrorist activity in the world, but also to revitalize the Conference as the sole negotiating platform for agreements on international legal instruments in the field of multilateral arms control, disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

In his statement, Minister Lavrov made convincing arguments regarding the real and growing threat of chemical terrorism, the need to develop the international legal framework for suppressing such terrorism and the role and place of the Conference in this process. Accordingly, the draft programme of work for the Conference consists of two main parts.

The first provides for a negotiating mandate for the convention itself. I stress that we are talking about a separate legally binding instrument which would not undermine the Chemical Weapons Convention. I wish to recall that the Chemical Weapons Convention was developed here, in Geneva, at the Conference.

The second part is devoted to the continuation of work on the four core items on the Conference's agenda, which, regrettably, cannot currently be negotiated for want of a consensus among the members of the Conference. These four items are nuclear disarmament, the prevention of an arms race in outer space, negative security assurances and a treaty banning the production of fissile material. We have thus tried to preserve the comprehensiveness and balance of the Conference's programme of work, which is something that all delegations, as far as we understand, support.

We do not claim that the Russian draft is an absolute truth, but we hope that, through our collective efforts, we will succeed in reaching a mutually acceptable outcome and in adopting a programme of work by consensus. We call on all Conference members to study the draft carefully. We are prepared to engage in dialogue and give consideration to constructive proposals. We are counting on everyone to participate actively and resolutely in this collective task, which will make it possible to break the vicious circle and start in-depth work, including negotiation, which was, after all, the original purpose of the Conference.

We are also open to bilateral and multilateral consultations to clarify the details of the Russian initiative. At the same time, our colleagues in Moscow are hard at work on the key elements of the convention and the text of an explanatory note. As soon as these documents are ready, we will share them with the Conference.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of the Russian Federation for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Kenya, Ambassador Andrew Kihurani.

Mr. Kihurani (Kenya): Mr. President, I have the honour to deliver the following statement on behalf of the Group of 21.

At the outset, the Group of 21 congratulates you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and expresses its appreciation for the open, transparent and efficient manner in which you are guiding the proceedings of the Conference. The Group also would like to extend its gratitude to the previous Presidents of the Conference for the efforts they deployed as a contribution to allow the Conference to resume substantive work, including negotiations at the earliest, and end the long impasse.

The Group of 21 would like to stress once again that the Conference on Disarmament is the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum mandated by the first special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament and emphasizes the importance of preserving it by strengthening the nature, role and mandate of this body. We must underscore the need to redouble our efforts in order to reinforce and revitalize the Conference and preserve its credibility through the resumption of substantive work, including negotiations on nuclear disarmament. The Group of 21 reaffirms its working papers submitted to the Conference in 2015 on nuclear disarmament, on the follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament, on negative security assurances, on prevention of an arms race in outer space and on the methods of work of the Conference on Disarmament and its revitalization.

Nuclear disarmament continues to be the highest priority of the international community. The Group of 21 reiterates its deep concern at the danger posed to the survival of humankind by the continued existence of nuclear weapons and of their possible use or threat of use. The Group, stressing its strong commitment to nuclear disarmament, underscores the urgent need to commence negotiations on this issue in the Conference on Disarmament without further delay. As the highest priority, the Conference should start negotiations on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, including a nuclear weapons convention prohibiting the possession, development, production, stockpiling, transfer and use of nuclear weapons leading to the global, non-discriminatory and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons with a specified framework of time. In this context, the Group recalls its working paper contained in document CD/2032

in which it called for the urgent commencement of negotiations on nuclear disarmament in the Conference, in particular on a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer and use or threat of use and provide for their destruction.

The Group welcomes the formal proclamation, for the first time in history, of Latin America and the Caribbean as a zone of peace on the occasion of the Second Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), held in Havana, Cuba, on 28 and 29 January 2014, which includes the commitment of all States of that region to further nuclear disarmament as a priority goal and to contribute to general and complete disarmament. This proclamation will hopefully be followed by other political proclamations of zones of peace in other regions of the world.

The Group welcomes the Political Declaration of Quito, adopted at the Fourth Summit of CELAC, held in Quito, Ecuador, on 27 January 2016, which reaffirms, *inter alia*, the commitment of CELAC to the preservation of peace and international security, political independence and nuclear disarmament conducive to general, total and verifiable disarmament. CELAC reaffirmed its commitment to the consolidation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a zone of peace and highlights its character as the first-ever nuclear-weapon-free zone established under the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

The Group reaffirms the absolute validity of multilateral diplomacy in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation and expresses its determination to promote multilateralism as the core principle of negotiations in these areas. The Group welcomes the convening of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament on 26 September 2013 and reaffirms the related Assembly resolution 70/34 on follow-up to this meeting. As the Secretary-General of the United Nations rightly mentioned at the Conference last year, the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament demonstrated that this issue remains a major international priority and deserves attention at the highest levels. In this vein, the Group fully supports the goals of this resolution, in particular its call for an urgent decision by the Conference to commence negotiation on nuclear disarmament, particularly a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use and to provide for their destruction. The Group of 21 will make a separate statement in the Conference plenary on this issue.

The Group also welcomes the decision to convene not later than 2018 a United Nations high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament to review the progress made in this regard. The Group welcomes with appreciation the establishment of 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, highlighting the events around the world to commemorate the observation of this day, and calls on Governments, parliaments and civil society to take further action annually to commemorate the day.

The Group reaffirms the importance of the multilateral disarmament machinery. It notes the report of the Open-ended Working Group mandated by the General Assembly to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons, and hopes that it would contribute towards negotiations on nuclear disarmament in the Conference, in particular a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use and to provide for their destruction. To this end, the Group of 21 welcomes General Assembly resolution 68/46, in which the Assembly recognized that the Open-ended Working Group had engaged in an open, constructive, transparent and interactive manner to address various issues related to nuclear disarmament. Furthermore, the Group of 21 also notes General Assembly resolution 70/33 on taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations and hopes that the membership will engage actively and constructively in the Open-ended Working Group it established. The Group of 21 hopes that this process will contribute to the work of the Conference.

The Group reaffirms that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Pending the

achievement of the complete elimination of such weapons, the Group reaffirms the urgent need for the conclusion of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument to effectively assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons as a matter of high priority. The Group expresses concern that despite the commitment of the nuclear-weapon States and long-standing requests by non-nuclear-weapon States to receive such legally binding assurances, no tangible progress has been achieved in this regard. It is a matter of more concern that non-nuclear-weapon States implicitly or explicitly have been subject to nuclear threats by some nuclear-weapon States contrary to their obligations under the Charter of the United Nations. The Group also calls for the commencement of negotiations in order to reach agreement on an international convention prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 70/62.

The Group concurs with the United Nations Secretary-General that there is growing understanding of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons and, in this regard, welcomes the hosting of the conferences on this subject, convened in Oslo on 4 and 5 March 2013, in Mexico on 13 and 14 February and in Vienna on 8 and 9 December 2014. In this context, the Group expresses its deepest concern over the immediate, indiscriminate and massive death and destruction caused by any nuclear weapon detonation and its long-term catastrophic consequences on human health, the environment and other vital economic resources, thus endangering the life of present and future generations. The Group believes that the full realization of the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons must underpin all approaches, efforts and international commitments towards nuclear disarmament through an inclusive process involving all States.

The members of the Group of 21 that are States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) welcome the spirit of the findings of the conferences on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons. We call on all nuclear-weapon States that are parties to the NPT to implement their unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, leading to nuclear disarmament to which all States parties are committed under article VI of the NPT. Given the catastrophic humanitarian consequences and unacceptable risks and threats associated with a nuclear weapons detonation, we will endeavour to cooperate with all relevant stakeholders in efforts to prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons. In this regard, we note the relevant resolutions adopted at the seventieth session of the United Nations General Assembly.

The Group of 21 expresses its disappointment that the Conference on Disarmament has not been able to undertake substantive work on its agenda. The Group takes note of various efforts to reach consensus on the Conference's programme of work and all subsequent decisions, efforts and proposals towards this end. The Group reiterates the urgency for the Conference to execute its mandate as set out by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and also to adopt and implement a balanced and comprehensive programme of work on the basis of its agenda, while taking into account the security interests of all States and dealing with, *inter alia*, the core issues, including nuclear disarmament, in accordance with the rules of procedure, including the rule of consensus. The Group encourages you, Mr. President, to spare no efforts and to continue wide consultations with all delegations to the Conference to achieve this goal.

The Group furthermore believes that promoting the work of the United Nations disarmament machinery hinges on the need to exercise political will, taking into account the collective security interests of all States.

While expressing its deep concern over the persistent lack of consensus on the implementation of the multilateral disarmament agenda in the United Nations disarmament machinery, particularly in fulfilling the commitments on nuclear disarmament as the highest priority, the Group reaffirms its support for the early convening of a fourth special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament and expresses its deep concern over the fact that the special session is yet to be convened. The Group welcomes General Assembly decision 70/551 of 23 December 2015, by which the Assembly decided to hold an organizational session of the Open-ended Working Group on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

The Group of 21 reiterates the importance of the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction and deeply regrets the delay of concrete actions to that end. The members of the Group of 21 that are States parties to the NPT express their disappointment and deep concern that three States parties, including two States that bear special responsibility as NPT depositaries and co-sponsor States of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference resolution on the Middle East, blocked consensus on the draft outcome document of the ninth NPT Review Conference, including the process to establish a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction as contained in the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. This could undermine efforts towards strengthening the NPT regime as a whole. The members of the Group of 21 that are States parties to the NPT reaffirm that the 1995 resolution on the Middle East continues to constitute the basis for the establishment of such a zone and that the 1995 resolution remains valid until fully implemented. The members of the Group of 21 that are States parties to the NPT also express their serious concern over the lack of implementation of the 1995 resolution and, in accordance with paragraph 6 of the resolution, call upon all States parties to the NPT, and in particular the nuclear-weapon States, to extend their cooperation and to exert their utmost efforts with a view to ensuring the early establishment by regional parties of a Middle East zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction; and they reaffirm that the co-sponsors of the resolution must take all the necessary measures to fully implement it without further delay.

The members of the Group of 21 that are States parties to the NPT express their utmost concern that the persistent lack of implementation of the 1995 resolution, contrary to the decisions made at the relevant NPT review conferences, erodes the credibility of the NPT and disrupts the delicate balance among its three pillars, taking into account that the indefinite extension of the Treaty is inextricably linked to the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. In this context, the members of the Group of 21 that are States parties to the NPT reaffirm the urgency of the accession by Israel to the Treaty without further delay and the placement of all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. While the lack of agreement on an outcome document could undermine the NPT regime, the members of the Group of 21 that are States parties to the NPT emphasize the continued validity of the commitments made in 1995, 2000 and 2010, in particular the unequivocal undertaking towards nuclear disarmament, and call for their full implementation without further delay.

The Group recognizes the importance of continuing consultations on the question of the possibility of expansion of the membership of the Conference.

The Group also recognizes the importance of enhancing engagement between civil society and the Conference on Disarmament, according to decisions taken by the Conference, and continues to support the strengthening of the Conference's interaction with civil society. In this regard, the Group welcomes the convening of the Conference on Disarmament/civil society forum on 19 March 2015, which was hosted by the Acting Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Kenya for his statement. The next speaker is the Netherlands.

Mr. Kos (Netherlands): Mr. President, I am speaking on behalf of the European Union.

First of all, I would like to congratulate you upon your assumption of the presidency, and also I would like to congratulate the women of the world on the occasion of International Women's Day.

The European Union welcomes the adoption of United Nations Security Council resolution 2270 (2016) on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. All member States of the European Union co-sponsored this resolution.

In her statement of 2 March 2016, European Union High Representative and European Commission Vice-President Federica Mogherini stressed that the unanimous adoption by the Security Council of this resolution was a clear expression of the unity and resolve of the international community to uphold the global non-proliferation regime and to

target the illegal nuclear, weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programmes of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and its ability to finance them. She underlined that the actions of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea earlier this year represented a grave threat to international peace and security in the region and beyond.

The transposition of this resolution into European Union law is under way, and the European Union will consider whether additional autonomous restrictive measures are called for to complement this resolution. The European Union calls on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comply with its international obligations and abandon its programmes to develop ballistic missiles and nuclear capabilities in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea must refrain from any action that could further increase regional tensions and it should engage in a credible and meaningful dialogue with the international community.

The President: I thank the representative of the Netherlands for his statement. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? I recognize the representative of Colombia. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. Jater Peña (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, as this is the first time my delegation has taken the floor since the start of your presidency, please accept our congratulations on your assumption of this office and allow us to express our full support in the performance of your duties.

Colombia fully endorses the declaration made by the Permanent Representative of Kenya on behalf of the Group of 21. Regarding the proposals on the adoption of a programme of work put forward by Nigeria, the United Kingdom and the Russian Federation, my delegation would like to emphasize the importance we ascribe to the efforts shown by the delegations of these countries to break through the impasse in which the Conference on Disarmament finds itself.

Although my delegation is still awaiting instructions from our capital, we would like to state that we see positive points in the proposal tabled by the Russian Federation, for example the idea of reviving the Conference's negotiating mandate and the suggestion to hold formal exchanges between the Conference and civil society.

Colombia wishes to highlight that the unusual number of positive options before us should compel us to seek without delay a consolidated proposal combining all the substantive points. It would be wholly illogical to oppose taking a step forward in the light of these proposals. Mr. President, you may count on my delegation's commitment to swiftly moving towards the adoption of a balanced and comprehensive programme of work.

The President: I thank the representative of Colombia for his statement. The next speaker on the list is the Republic of Korea. You have the floor, Ambassador.

Mr. Kim Young-moo (Republic of Korea): Mr. President, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

First of all, my delegation appreciates our Russian colleague's detailed and kind explanation of the draft proposal for a programme of work to conduct negotiations on an international convention for the suppression of acts of chemical terrorism. We welcome the Russian initiative to revitalize the Conference by suggesting a draft proposal. We are looking closely at this proposal with our capital and we expect more serious discussions will follow this afternoon.

My delegation wishes to take this opportunity to assure you that the Republic of Korea welcomes and supports the unanimous adoption of United Nations Security Council resolution 2270 (2016) against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We highly commend all members of the Security Council, including the five permanent members, for concluding one of the most robust sanction regimes in the history of the United Nations. In this regard, my delegation cordially asks all Conference member countries to fully cooperate to implement the resolution in an exhaustive and thorough manner, which will finally force the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abandon its nuclear programme in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea for his statement. The next speaker on the list is the Ambassador of Japan. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. Sano (Japan): Mr. President, I would like to echo the statements made by the Republic of Korea and the Netherlands on behalf of the European Union regarding the adoption of Security Council resolution 2270 (2016). We highly appreciate that the Security Council unanimously adopted the resolution on 3 March. As a Council member, Japan has been working closely with the countries concerned for its adoption. Japan strongly urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comply faithfully and fully with Council resolution 2270 and other relevant Security Council resolutions and also to take positive action towards denuclearization.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Japan for his statement. The next speaker is the Ambassador of China. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. Fu Cong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Mr. President, I would like first of all to congratulate you on assuming the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I would also like to wish our women colleagues in attendance at today's meeting a happy International Women's Day.

Mr. President, since assuming the presidency you have held extensive consultations and devoted an enormous amount of effort to the programme of work, for which we would like to express our appreciation. China, like other member States, is deeply concerned about the impasse in the Conference. We hope that the parties will be able to overcome their differences quickly and arrive at a comprehensive and balanced programme of work so that the Conference can resume its substantive work. To be clear, the current situation is the result of numerous, diverse factors: firstly, the parties have obvious differences about where to place priorities; secondly, it is extremely difficult to ensure that no country's security is diminished in circumstances where their situations differ so widely; and thirdly, the Conference's agenda has not been able to keep pace with the immense changes that have taken place in the international security situation and in military technologies over the past 30 years.

In these circumstances, neither mutual accusations nor pressure tactics aimed at forcing some States to sacrifice their core security interests offer a way out. We must calmly analyse the situation and break new ground in our thinking to seek out a solution acceptable to all. Recent Presidents of the Conference, including those from Nigeria, the United Kingdom and the Russian Federation, have shown ingenuity in putting forth numerous new ideas, and we appreciate their efforts. At present, although we still have yet to reach a consensus, we are moving in the right direction.

The Government of China firmly opposes all forms of terrorism and has consistently and actively taken part in international efforts to fight nuclear, biological and chemical terrorism. China believes that the proposal put forth by the Russian Federation to negotiate and conclude a treaty against chemical terrorism is of great importance, as it will strengthen international efforts to combat terrorism and will advance the international disarmament and non-proliferation process. We are willing to further explore this possibility with all parties.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of China for his statement. The next speaker is the representative of Belarus. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. Nikolaichik (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): I would first of all like to join others in offering congratulations on the occasion of International Women's Day. I hope that the beauty, experience and wisdom traditionally bestowed upon women will help us to achieve progress in our work and make a decisive contribution to the cause of disarmament.

As women in Belarus are deeply loved and valued, and the celebration of International Women's Day has already been going on for four days, allow me now to make some preliminary comments on the initiative of the Russian Federation.

To begin, I would like to note that Minister Lavrov's initiative strikes us as topical, inasmuch as the Chemical Weapons Convention focuses more on stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction under the control of States, which leaves a gap to be filled. In this

connection, we believe that the Conference on Disarmament is the best platform for consideration of the initiative and, for us, it will provide an opportunity not only to revitalize negotiations but also to make a contribution to the suppression of terrorism.

With regard to the proposals for the second cluster of issues, we believe that they can serve as the basis for the adoption of a programme of work in the time remaining before 1 April, when the first part of the Conference's current session comes to an end.

Belarus is prepared to participate in efforts to agree on the contents of a programme of work, formulate the appropriate wording and produce a consensus document.

The President: I thank the representative of Belarus for his statement. The next speaker is the representative of the United States. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. Buck (United States of America): Mr. President, in recognition of International Women's Day, I am pleased to have this opportunity to emphasize the high importance the United States places on supporting the full inclusion of women in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control affairs and the promotion of women's leadership and participation in the field of global security. We know that including women and their perspectives in our conflict prevention efforts, in our efforts to end wars and bring about just and sustainable peace and in our efforts to protect civilian populations and hold accountable those that commit war crimes and crimes against humanity is absolutely essential to international peace and stability and to the national security of the United States.

Moreover, the United States is committed to advocating on behalf of women and closing the gender gap on all fronts, whether that be in access to justice, opportunities for education or leadership roles in the public and private sectors. This is evident not only through daily practices but through our work and support of the Geneva Gender Champions initiative. This initiative was launched by Director-General Michael Møller, United States Ambassador Pamela Hamamoto and civil society leader Caitlin Kraft Buchman last July, and it focuses on gender equality and the empowerment of women by working to break down the systemic barriers that are preventing women from fully contributing. The Geneva Gender Champions is a unique initiative because it invites Permanent Representatives, observers and heads of the United Nations and other international organizations to join in and commit to undertake three concrete, measurable and accountable institutional actions to advance gender equality. In line with the 2016 International Women's Day theme "Pledge for Parity", the first of these actions is to sign the Geneva Gender Champions panel parity pledge to urge panel organizers across Geneva to strive for gender balance at their events. Already, 90 international institutions and individuals in Geneva have signed on as Geneva Gender Champions, including the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research and a number of colleagues here in the chamber today. Going a step further, the Geneva Gender Champions initiative asks leaders to undertake two more concrete and measurable actions of their choosing to advance gender equality. On International Women's Day, we can remember women of the past, we can celebrate women of today and we can lay the foundation for women of tomorrow, but most importantly we can pledge to make a change, knowing that our world can reach its full potential only when women and girls are empowered to reach their full potential. In that vein, we encourage those who have not yet had an opportunity to do so to join us in becoming Geneva Gender Champions.

As we celebrate the fifteenth anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), which was a watershed moment that spurred global action in elevating women as equal partners, the United States is committed to reaffirming that investing in women is not just the right thing to do: their equal participation and full involvement in decision-making advances peace and security.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Russian delegation for presenting their programme of work and to offer a few comments in that regard. The United States policy on weapons of mass destruction is clear and unambiguous. We must hold fully accountable any State, terrorist group or other non-State actor that supports or enables terrorist efforts to obtain or use weapons of mass destruction. With respect to the recent and horrific use of chemical weapons, the United States has partnered with the Russian Federation to pass Security Council resolutions 2209 (2015) and 2235 (2015) to address the use of chemical weapons by any party in Syria and to include the work of the Joint

Investigative Mechanism or joint investigative mission in identifying all those involved in chemical weapons use in Syria. While, in our view, the Conference is not the appropriate place to address this particular issue, we are interested in working with Russia and others in the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) or other venues and are studying the proposal in that context. We look forward to elaborating on these comments and to discussing all the various proposals for the programme of work that have been put forward thus far in informal consultations that will come this afternoon.

Finally, I would like to comment briefly on another issue which has been mentioned in the chamber by a number of other delegations this morning: specifically, the passage of Security Council resolution 2270 (2016) last week. Mr. President, the international community has strongly condemned the recent nuclear test and launch using ballistic missile technology by North Korea in clear violation of its Security Council obligations. The Security Council resolution adopted unanimously on 2 March reflects the firm and united resolve of the international community to address the continued defiance by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of its international obligations and commitments. The resolution is aimed at halting the efforts by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to sustain and advance its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes that pose a threat not only to security on the peninsula, but the whole world.

The President: I thank the representative of the United States for his statement. The next speaker on the list is the Ambassador of the Netherlands.

Mr. Van der Kwast (Netherlands): Mr. President, it is with some hesitation that I take the floor, the reason for that being — normally, I do not hesitate too much in this forum — that I will be the fourth man speaking on International Women's Day. Maybe later in the debate that will change.

Today is International Women's Day, and several delegations have made reference to that. Women and disarmament is an issue that deserves, in our opinion, much more attention, and that is why the Netherlands gave particular attention to this issue during its presidency last year. We had three expert speakers who gave an overview of the situation. One was the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security and on United Nations Security Council resolution 1325, Marriët Schuurman; another was a speaker from the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs giving an overview of where the Office stands and what additional plans they are making; and the third one was an expert on demining who gave an overview of the gender approach in Dutch policies to demining. In the informal debate that followed, several delegations, including Italy, Indonesia, India, Pakistan, the United Kingdom and the United States, welcomed greater attention being given to the issue of women and disarmament. In line with that, at the beginning of 2016 we sent a letter to all incoming Presidents of the Conference on Disarmament suggesting that greater attention be given to the issue of women and disarmament. I hope that this year one of the Conference Presidents will organize further attention on this issue in the Conference, because we think it merits more attention.

With regard to the Russian proposal, Mr. President, we have seen it and are studying it. It is difficult to say more at this moment. We do welcome the fact that there are now three proposals from three of the five permanent members of the Security Council on the table. If this shows renewed engagement, I think that would be encouraging for the debate in this body.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of the Netherlands for his statement. The next speaker on the list is the Ambassador of Pakistan. You have the floor, Madam.

Ms. Janjua (Pakistan): Mr. President, I also wish to congratulate all the men and women in this room on International Women's Day and I hope my colleague from the Netherlands will not be disappointed to hear that he has intoned a woman's voice in this chamber on this issue.

Mr. President, we appreciate the manner in which you are presiding over the Conference on Disarmament and assure you of my delegation's continued support and cooperation.

We associate ourselves with the statement delivered by the representative of Kenya, Ambassador Kihurani, on behalf of the Group of 21.

We would also like to thank Ambassador Alexey Borodavkin for introducing the Russian proposal for a draft programme of work. We also take note of the other proposals on the table, namely the United Kingdom proposal and the Nigerian proposal, as well as the United States proposal. We welcome the holding of open-ended informal consultations later today on these proposals. We will share our views on these proposals during the informal meeting.

Mr. President, I have requested the floor now to say a few words on women and disarmament, making use of the occasion of International Women's Day, which is celebrated across the world on 8 March each year. This year, unfortunately, we do not have the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom present in the chamber to deliver their traditional statement. The League has carried out seminal work in sensitizing the international community to the issue of women and disarmament. We take this opportunity to invite the League to reconsider their decision and resume their participation in the Conference. Whether we agree with every word that they say or not, it is important to have the voice of civil society heard in our work.

Pakistan fully supports the effective participation of women in an inclusive approach to peace and security, including disarmament. The latest United Nations General Assembly resolution on this issue, resolution 69/61 entitled "Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control", was adopted on 11 December 2014. Pakistan supported the resolution and voted in favour of its adoption. The resolution rightly points out that equal, full and effective participation of both men and women is one of the essential factors for the promotion and attainment of sustainable peace and security. In the resolution, the Assembly also urged Member States, relevant subregional and regional organizations, the United Nations and the specialized agencies to promote equal opportunities for the representation of women in all decision-making processes with regard to matters related to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

I also take this opportunity to highlight the representation of Pakistani women in prominent roles concerning international security and disarmament. The Permanent Representatives of Pakistan to the United Nations in New York and to the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna are women, including myself, of course. The Additional Foreign Secretary in charge of disarmament issues in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan in Islamabad is also a woman. This of course is in addition to the numerous other Pakistani women who are serving as Ambassadors and diplomats in various capitals all over the globe, as well as peacekeepers in United Nations peacekeeping missions in different parts of the world.

Pakistani women have also attained high political positions in the country, including a two-term Prime Minister as well as a Foreign Minister and Speaker of the National Assembly, among many other important positions.

A Pakistani film maker, Sharmeen Obaid Chinoy, recently made us proud by winning the Oscar award for the best documentary film for the second time in four years. Both films were related to women's issues and we are proud that she was able to courageously bring forth these issues. She joins a long list of talented Pakistani women who have won international acclaim, including the Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Malala Yousafzai.

Mr. President, Pakistan is committed to better realization of the issue of women and disarmament and paying specific attention to all facets of women's experiences of conflict — as victims, as combatants and as agents of change — in order to realize women's rights of participation in disarmament and arms control programmes, conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding. We recognize that we still have a long way to go to overcome

the numerous challenges in this regard. But we remain committed to bringing real change on the ground.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Pakistan for her statement. The next speaker on the list is the Ambassador of Sweden. You have the floor, Madam.

Ms. Bard (Sweden): Mr. President, as the representative of the first feminist government and a member of the Geneva Champions Gender initiative, I fully align myself with what my Pakistani colleague and male colleagues have just said about the importance of promoting the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and women's participation, including in the field of disarmament.

Allow me also to commend you and your team on your work to achieve progress in the Conference on Disarmament towards substantive work. We fully share your frustration over the almost two-decade long deadlock and the assessment that responsibility rests with the Conference's member States. Against this backdrop, Sweden supports any proposal that we believe stands a chance of moving the Conference forward in a constructive way and add value to disarmament efforts, while of course evaluating all proposals on their own merits. Over the past two months, we have seen several proposals by member States designed to achieve such progress. Sweden supported the proposal by the previous Conference President, Nigeria, and has welcomed initiatives by other members to break the deadlock, notably the United States and most recently the United Kingdom proposal circulated to the Conference members on 22 February. Last week, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov introduced the latest in this row of initiatives, proposing to start our work on a convention against chemical weapons terrorism. Sweden shares the concern about continued use of toxic chemicals in the Syrian conflict and, while the Syrian regime is implicated in a number of cases currently under investigation by the Joint Investigative Mechanism of the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, credible allegations about sulphur mustard in the hands of Daesh are certainly a very worrying development. At this stage, however, we have some initial reflections and questions with regard to the Russian proposal which we will raise in the informal consultations beginning this afternoon.

Mr. President, I would like to reiterate the preparedness of Sweden to contribute to any solution that might break the deadlock and help us focus on substantive substance rather than process. Insofar as the proposals currently on the table might move us in that direction, we are ready to talk.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Sweden for her statement. I see that the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic has asked to take the floor. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. Al-Nuqari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Mr. President, please allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. It is clear that many proposals are being put forward and we hope that they will lead to the adoption of a programme of work that will steer the Conference out of its current impasse.

Secondly, I would like to congratulate all the women present with us in the room, and all the women of the world, on the occasion of International Women's Day. It is, we believe, an opportunity to enable women to participate more broadly — and we are talking in particular about the Conference on Disarmament — in questions related to international peace and security.

Let me now turn to my third point, which is to express the full support of my country, as a member of the Group of 21, for the statement delivered by Kenya on behalf of the Group.

Fourthly, although this forum exists to negotiate legally binding instruments on disarmament, I have noticed that there is a certain amount of confusion among certain parties in their understanding of its exact role. In fact, the Conference on Disarmament is the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. When we say "single disarmament negotiating forum", we mean that it exists to produce international legal instruments on disarmament; and when we say "international legal instruments", what we mean are

agreements and treaties and the like. Everyone knows that, as a matter of principle, the point of departure for agreements is not a specific individual situation. Rather, they serve to regulate a particular matter on the basis of a general and comprehensive framework. I am not specifically commenting upon the Russian proposal but on remarks I have heard concerning that proposal. The Russian proposal did not just concern Syria; it employed the example of the use of chemical weapons by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, either in the Syrian Arab Republic or in Iraq, as a way to underscore the importance of that issue. Unfortunately, some parties have begun addressing the issue as if it affected only the Syrian Arab Republic or as if what we are discussing here is the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic. This, I believe, represents a failure to understand that this forum does not deal with specific issues affecting specific countries. It exists to negotiate a binding international legal instrument within a general context.

Finally, I have said it before in this Conference and I say it again now, that the word “regime” should not be used when speaking about my country. I am very sorry that the term was just employed by the representative of Sweden. There is something called the Syrian State, there is something called the Syrian Government and there is a President of the Syrian Arab Republic. I do not wish to discuss this matter again. There are diplomatic terms that must be respected when dealing with representatives of States. There is no regime: there is a Syrian State. I wish this to be clear to our colleagues in this room when they speak about or refer to my country.

The President: I thank the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic for his statement. I recognize the representative of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. Jo Chol-su (Democratic People’s Republic of Korea): Mr. President, on behalf of the delegation of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, I would like to convey our warmest congratulations to the women in the world, including those present in this chamber, on the occasion of International Women’s Day.

I had no intention to take the floor today, but I do so as the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea was mentioned in the remarks of some delegations. In response to the remarks made by the delegations on the so-called United Nations Security Council resolution, I would like to refer to the statement made by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea Foreign Ministry spokesman on last 4 March.

Another “resolution on sanctions” was fabricated by the United States by abusing the United Nations Security Council, while finding fault with the hydrogen bomb test and satellite launch by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. The “resolution” — unprecedented in its viciousness and illegality — is a brigandish product which can never be justified.

If access to nuclear weapons is to be called into question, that of the United States — the first country in the world which had access to nuclear weapons and is the only user of them — should be; and if any fault is to be found with access by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea to nuclear weapons, it is imperative to pull up the United States over the hostile policy and nuclear threat towards the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea for which it is responsible.

Access by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea to nuclear weapons is an unavoidable option for self-defence, as the United States — the world’s largest nuclear-weapon State and the only user of nuclear weapons — has designated the dignified Democratic People’s Republic of Korea as an “axis of evil” and target of a pre-emptive nuclear strike, and it has persistently escalated hostile moves and nuclear threats to the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea by introducing various kinds of lethal hardware for a nuclear war.

The hydrogen bomb test and satellite launch by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea are being termed a breach of the previous “resolutions” of the Security Council but, in essence, those “resolutions” are a product of high-handedness practised beyond the mandate of the Security Council. If the Security Council has a mandate to ban an individual

country from conducting a nuclear test, what does the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) exist for and what is the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty necessary for?

As for the satellite launch, it is the legitimate right of a sovereign State. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea shaped the five-year programme for national aerospace development through the legitimate exercise of the independent right recognized by international law and, according to it, successfully launched Earth observation satellite Kwangmyongsong-4, which is now under normal operation.

Where in the Charter of the United Nations is the mandate stipulated investing the Security Council with the right to deprive an individual United Nations member nation of the right to use space for peaceful purposes, a right specified in international law?

If there is fault to be found with the satellite launch by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, it is necessary to call into question all countries that launch satellites, including the United States. The United States, preoccupied with hostility towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, was so crude as not to hesitate to designate "luxury goods" as embargoed items in a bid to prohibit the Democratic People's Republic of Korea from importing even sports apparatus, such as ski resort facilities, which have nothing to do with the development of weaponry. Underlying this is a vicious hostile purpose and nature against human rights, aimed at keeping the happy laughter of people from being heard at cultural recreation grounds, such as the ski resort in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and preventing its people from enjoying a highly civilized socialist life — the promise that the Workers' Party of Korea made to them — and, furthermore, to bring down the social system of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea bitterly denounces and totally rejects all "resolutions" against it, including the recent "resolution", which are being misused for sinister political purposes of a big Power, in wanton violation of the independent right to development and right to existence of a sovereign State and as criminal documents devoid of impartiality, legitimacy and morality.

Many member nations of the United Nations — small countries, in particular — are getting increasingly vocal in their call for democratic reform of the Security Council, the most undemocratic and unfair, old structure, the nature of which has been left intact within the United Nations machinery. And they are expressing their protest by ignoring unreasonable resolutions of the Security Council.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea, a country that travelled the path of self-reliance and self-development in the face of United States sanctions and blockades, recently took the path it should already have taken, while being fully aware that the United States would slap sanctions on it again.

The self-development-first principle of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is the strength of a courageous people who have emerged as a hydrogen-bomb State and satellite-launching State by dint of their indigenous wisdom and technology with a firm belief in their own efforts, despite the ceaseless hostile policy and sanctions of the United States that have lasted for more than seven decades.

It is a serious miscalculation to think that sanctions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will work.

The bolstering of the nuclear deterrent of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is an exercise of the just right to self-defence, which should be done constantly as long as the United States persists in its hostile policy; and the satellite launch by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea forms part of work for space development pursuant to the legitimate right of a sovereign State, which should be done ceaselessly forever, regardless of the hostile United States policy, whose termination is still up in the air.

The United States will be wholly responsible for the total failure of the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula as it refused to the end to abandon its hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The President: I thank the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for his statement. The next speaker is the representative of Turkey. You have the floor, Madam.

Ms. Kasnakli (Turkey): Mr. President, as this is the first time my delegation is taking the floor under your presidency, let me first congratulate you on your assumption of that office. I wish you success in your endeavours and assure you of my delegation's support. I also thank you for organizing the informal discussions this afternoon on the programme of work. We will be participating in that, so I will save some of my comments for the afternoon.

We listened carefully to the presentation made earlier by the Russian Federation, and the draft that was circulated last Friday is under consideration in my capital. The existence of chemical weapons in the world, especially in the Middle East, is a major concern for Turkey, the region and the international community as a whole. Unfortunately, chemical weapons have been used in three conflicts in our immediate neighbourhood over the past three decades. The risk of acquisition of chemical weapons by terrorist organizations is a serious concern for us. We support strengthening the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), which is a crucial instrument in preventing the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery by non-State actors.

The draft programme of work recently proposed by the Russian Federation requires careful consideration. There are a series of questions to be answered, and I am sure we will have time to engage with those questions. At this moment, let me say that one question to be included is whether the Conference on Disarmament would be the best venue to have negotiations on this issue. The danger of the production, acquisition and use of chemical weapons by terrorists is an important issue recognized by the international community; however, this recognition should not be portrayed to distract the attention of the international community from current realities. The Chemical Weapons Convention stipulates that individuals, entities, groups or Governments involved in the use of chemicals as weapons, including chlorine or any other toxic chemicals, must be held accountable. In that regard, we are following closely the work of the Joint Investigative Mechanism established pursuant to Security Council resolution 2235 (2015).

The President: I thank the representative of Turkey for her statement. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? That does not seem to be the case.

This concludes our business for this morning. As I mentioned at the beginning of this meeting, I wish to hold informal open-ended consultations this afternoon at 3 p.m. These informal consultations will take place in room IX. Our next formal plenary meeting is, for the time being, scheduled to take place on Tuesday, 15 March, at 10 a.m. in the Council Chamber.

This meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.