

Conference on Disarmament

English

Final record of the one thousand five hundred and seventy-first plenary meeting

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President: Mr. Yuri Borissov Sterk (Bulgaria)



The President: Distinguished colleagues, there are a few speakers remaining on the list of speakers for today's thematic discussion on agenda item 2. The first speaker this afternoon will be the distinguished delegate of Argentina, Ms. Estefania Porta.

Ms. Porta (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, first of all, my delegation would like to thank Mr. Wilfred Wan of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research and Ms. Jenifer Mackby for their valuable presentations. One aspect of these presentations which we would like to highlight and which we believe goes to the root of the issue under discussion today is the fact that the modernization of nuclear weapons, i.e. vertical proliferation, increases the risk of use of such weapons, since modernization makes them more accurate and their effects on the target more predictable.

In this regard, my delegation would like to stress the need to prevent the modernization of nuclear arsenals in a situation of heightened tensions among some nuclear-weapon States, with increased strategic competition and the possibility of destabilizing regional crises. We therefore regret that the Conference on Disarmament has been unable to adopt a programme of work, which would have allowed us to discuss the issue of modernization under items 1 and 2 of the Conference agenda. At the same time, my delegation would like to stress that, in addition to multilateral efforts, Argentina recognizes the validity of unilateral, bilateral and regional measures within the framework of nuclear disarmament. We call on nuclear-possessor States to assess and advance these types of measures.

Lastly, Mr. President, my delegation wishes to point out that Argentina does not regard accepting the virtues of a step-by-step approach to nuclear disarmament and the cessation of the arms race as incompatible with pursuing the objective of the total elimination and prohibition of nuclear weapons.

The President: I thank the distinguished delegate of Argentina and I now give the floor to Mr. Ichiro Ogasawara, Ambassador of Japan.

Mr. Ogasawara (Japan): Mr. President, Japan would like to express its sincere gratitude to you for organizing the thematic debate under agenda item 2, prevention of a nuclear war, including all related matters. I also greatly appreciate the contributions of Mr. Wan of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research and Ms. Mackby of the Federation of American Scientists, with their useful and well-articulated presentations regarding nuclear risk reduction. Today, let me share the position of Japan on this topic.

Mr. President, the total elimination of nuclear weapons is a common goal of the international community shared by Japan, as the only country to have ever suffered atomic bombing during war. Japan continues its efforts towards this goal based upon a realistic and pragmatic approach aimed at ensuring that the tragedies of Hiroshima and Nagasaki will never be repeated. It is also in this context that Japan has submitted draft resolutions on the elimination of nuclear weapons to the General Assembly.

Efforts aimed at nuclear risk reduction contribute to preserving and promoting international peace and security and to building the trust and confidence conducive to future cooperation. But nuclear risk reduction efforts do not provide a substitute for implementation of the nuclear disarmament obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Instead, nuclear risk reduction efforts should complement and be coupled with sustained nuclear disarmament efforts.

Mr. President, from the perspective of nuclear risk reduction, Japan welcomes the five-year extension of the New START announced by the United States of America and the Russian Federation in February this year. The progress achieved with this extension should be expanded to construct a broader arms control framework that includes a wider range of nations, beyond the United States and the Russian Federation, and weapons systems. General Assembly resolution 75/71 on the elimination of nuclear weapons, submitted by Japan and adopted in autumn last year, also reaffirms the special responsibility of nuclear-weapon States in initiating arms control dialogues.

How to avoid an escalation caused by miscalculation or by misunderstanding is one of the vital issues to be addressed in the context of nuclear risk reduction. Given the current

international security environment and the emergence of new technologies, the relevance of such issues continues to increase.

It is for this reason that the General Assembly resolution on the elimination of nuclear weapons adopted last year encourages all States possessing nuclear weapons to take action to reduce the risk of a nuclear detonation occurring either by miscalculation or by misunderstanding, and to make further efforts to this end.

The measures envisaged to this purpose in the resolution include transparency and dialogue on nuclear doctrines and postures, military-to-military dialogues, hotlines or information and data exchanges. We propose this language, used in the resolution, as elements that could be taken up in the wording of the outcome documents of the upcoming Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference. These measures should be taken by all nuclear-weapon countries, regardless of the size of their nuclear forces. Smaller forces cannot be an excuse for not conducting measures to improve transparency and dialogue.

Mr. President, in 2017, Japan launched the process linked to the Group of Eminent Persons for Substantive Advancement of Nuclear Disarmament. In October 2019, the Group published its Chair's report, which was full of insights and inspiring thoughts, illustrating further steps towards nuclear disarmament. The report contains a number of proposals, including on nuclear risk reduction. It is stated, for example, that nuclear-weapon States should take measures to reduce the risk of use, including by ensuring the safety and security of their nuclear weapons, weapons-usable nuclear materials and related infrastructure.

Meaningful discussions related to nuclear risk reduction are also taking place in the work of various cross-regional groups such as the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, the Stockholm Initiative on Nuclear Disarmament and the Creating an Environment for Nuclear Disarmament initiative, in all of which Japan has actively participated. Some of these discussions have resulted in valuable concrete recommendations. Japan will continue to participate actively in these discussions and strive towards our common goal of reducing the risk of nuclear weapons.

The President: I thank Ambassador Ogasawara and I now give the floor to the next speaker, the distinguished delegate of China, Mr. Ji Zhaoyu.

Mr. Ji Zhaoyu (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Mr. President, in recent years, the global security situation has faced daunting challenges, as the former United States Administration played a zero-sum game and held onto a cold war mentality on questions such as strategic security and arms control, relations between the major powers and nuclear disarmament. It recklessly undermined the global strategic balance and stability and the existing international nuclear disarmament and arms control regime. The international community has thus paid greater attention to nuclear risk reduction.

In the new international strategic security situation, China believes that nuclear risk reduction has become an important issue whose solution calls for the common attention and joint efforts of all parties. The international community, and the major powers in particular, must focus their efforts on the following:

First, the five nuclear-weapon States should carry out a systematic, in-depth and extensive dialogue and ensure cooperation on all issues related to strategic security and stability. China has always been open to bilateral dialogues on strategic security and arms control issues with the nuclear-weapon States. We must completely abandon the cold war mentality, avoid intensifying competition among the major powers in the field of strategic security and, instead of treating one another as competing strategic adversaries, regard each other as cooperative partners, jointly safeguarding and enhancing global strategic security. One important step is for the five countries to reaffirm that "a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought".

Second, the five nuclear-weapon States should work to diminish the role of nuclear weapons in their national security doctrines and ensure that their nuclear forces are kept at the minimum level required to maintain national security. On the use of nuclear weapons, this means adopting the most responsible and restrained approach. Specifically, this means two things: first, to commit not to be the first to use nuclear weapons at any time and under any circumstances and to conclude a mutual non-first-use treaty, and secondly, to promise

unconditionally not to use or threaten to use such weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States and in nuclear-weapon-free zones, and to immediately undertake negotiations on a relevant international legal instrument in the Conference on Disarmament.

Third, strategic capacities must not be built up and deployed in a way that undermines strategic stability. In order to avoid seriously damaging mutual trust among the major powers and global strategic stability, a certain nuclear power should stop developing global anti-missile systems and seeking to deploy intermediate-range missiles in other regions.

Fourth, practical measures must be taken to reduce the risk of regional nuclear conflicts. All parties should bear in mind Security Council resolution 1172 (1998) and should work together to relax tensions in South Asia and maintain peace and stability there; we must actively commit to using political and diplomatic means to deal with the non-proliferation challenges in the Middle East and North-East Asia and to properly deal with the inextricable link between nuclear non-proliferation and regional security matters. The legitimate and reasonable security concerns of all parties must be respected so that the resolution of nuclear non-proliferation issues can effectively enhance the lasting peace, security and stability of the relevant regions.

Fifth, the nuclear-weapon States should abandon the practice of nuclear protection umbrellas, end their nuclear sharing policies and withdraw back to their countries all their nuclear weapons deployed in other countries.

Sixth, the challenges of new scientific and technological advances call for an appropriate response, with the promotion of new rules and regulations in such security areas as outer space, the Internet and artificial intelligence. The use of new technologies in the military field has a complex and profound impact on global strategic stability and must be subject to rules.

Mr. President, China has always scrupulously adhered to the principle that it will not be the first to use nuclear weapons at any time and under any circumstances. It has explicitly and unconditionally undertaken not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States and in nuclear-weapon-free zones. We have always limited the size of our nuclear capacity to the minimum necessary for safeguarding national security and have never deployed nuclear weapons in foreign territories.

China's defensive nuclear doctrine and nuclear policy have always played an important positive role in maintaining global strategic stability and reducing nuclear risks. We are willing to engage actively in dialogue and exchanges with all parties and to jointly explore effective measures to reduce nuclear risks and contribute to global strategic security.

The President: I thank the distinguished delegate of China and I now give the floor to the next speaker, Ambassador Hwang of France.

Mr. Hwang (France) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, I would like to start by thanking the speakers and commending the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research in particular for its work on risk reduction. Allow me to make some preliminary remarks. Nuclear and strategic risk reduction – we prefer the term “strategic risk reduction” as used by my British colleague this morning – should, in our view, be included under item 1 of the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament, as an essential step towards nuclear disarmament. We recognize the significance of this issue in the context of a tense and volatile environment and of rapid technological progress and challenges in the field of arms control. We also acknowledge its importance in the run-up to the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference, which we hope will lead to progress in strategic risk reduction. My country welcomes the decision of the United States of America and the Russian Federation to extend the new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty for five years. This step is key to preserving strategic stability and reinforcing transparency and trust.

Within the process being pursued by the nuclear-weapon States, known as the P5 process, currently chaired by my country, France and the United Kingdom are jointly coordinating work on strategic risk reduction. The aim is to reach a common understanding on this issue to present to the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference and to identify specific strategic risk reduction measures. It is the responsibility of the States involved in the

P5 process to reduce strategic risks by seeking greater strategic stability and working towards the goal of achieving a world without nuclear weapons, with undiminished security for all.

Nuclear risk reduction essentially involves reducing the risk of a nuclear conflict that no party wanted or expected. More specifically, the aim is to avoid conflicts caused by miscalculation or misinterpretation as a result of ambiguous actions, military exercises or launches that may lead to misunderstandings and escalation.

Meanwhile, the goal of non-proliferation must also remain our priority since the fewer nuclear players there are, the lower the risk will be. Building confidence and promoting transparency between nuclear-weapon States are key to strategic risk reduction. This is the whole point of the P5 format. Strengthening communication, transparency and dialogue is required to prevent or reduce the risk of miscalculation, misperception or unintended escalation, and thus enhance stability.

Mr. President, ongoing discussions on nuclear doctrines and policies, both bilateral and as part of the P5 process, are a fundamental part of these efforts to achieve transparency and predictability. In addition to the existing bilateral agreements and crisis management mechanisms, we must focus our efforts on continuing the dialogue on arms control and identifying new crisis prevention and management tools. All States, whether or not they have nuclear weapons, can make valuable contributions to strategic risk reduction through diplomatic efforts, platforms for dialogue and crisis resolution. We call on all States to take this path in the run-up to the next Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of France for his statement and I now give the floor to Mr. Robbert Jan Gabriëlse, the Ambassador of the Netherlands.

Mr. Gabriëlse (Netherlands): Mr. President, allow me to thank the panellists for their insightful presentations. The Netherlands welcomed this thematic debate on agenda item 2, with a focus today on nuclear risk reduction. Nuclear risk reduction is a key priority for the Netherlands. Preventing the use of nuclear weapons, either intentional or unintentional, is of central importance to our delegation and should be one of the key topics of discussion during the upcoming Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference. In this context, it is essential to promote mutual trust through dialogue and increased transparency, including in our nuclear policies and doctrines. I therefore urge all colleagues to explore further initiatives in order to move forward on this important topic and help reduce the risk of the potential use of nuclear weapons.

We would also like to welcome all ongoing initiatives on risk reduction during this review cycle, including the work done in the Creating an Environment for Nuclear Disarmament initiative, the Stockholm Initiative on Nuclear Disarmament and the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative and under the aegis of the European Union.

The Conference on Disarmament could well be the place to share, discuss and elaborate on ideas and initiatives as part of our substantive work. The unique membership of the Conference allows us to have an inclusive dialogue with all nuclear-weapon-possessing States. Furthermore, the discussions in subsidiary body 2 in 2018 devoted to this issue of nuclear risk reduction demonstrated that there was genuine interest among member States in conducting further work on this issue. Therefore the Conference on Disarmament should ask itself how it can contribute to nuclear risk reduction in concrete terms.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of the Netherlands for his statement and I now move to the next speaker, the distinguished delegate of Pakistan, Mr. Muhammad Omar.

Mr. Omar (Pakistan): Mr. President, we thank the distinguished panellists for their contribution and appreciate the support of the secretariat in organizing this meeting.

As we are discussing item 2 of the Conference's agenda, on prevention of a nuclear war, including all related matters, my delegation wishes to take this opportunity to dwell on the when and the what of this agenda item and to outline how and why it remains valid for the Conference. I would also like to touch upon the efforts made by some to artificially transplant into it peripheral items, instead of the core items that this body was designed to negotiate.

Mr. President, in February 1984, having just been redesignated as the Conference on Disarmament, this body also proceeded to bring about a bifurcation of its original agenda item 2, entitled "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament; prevention of a nuclear war, including all related matters". This splitting into two in 1984 to form what was then new item 3 was apparently in response to the calls made to urgently address the threat of nuclear war within the larger security framework of that era. Perhaps it was hoped that some progress would be achieved on aspects of the broader agenda surrounding nuclear disarmament, such as prevention of a nuclear war. Back then, as now, progress on the Conference on Disarmament's *raison d'être* was being blocked by a now-familiar group of States.

Mr. President, I wish to draw attention to the extensive research report produced by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research in 1991 entitled "Nuclear issues on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament", which had the following to say about this item: "Agenda Item 3 ... emerged from a debate on the legality of the possession and use of nuclear weapons and on how to control, reduce or eliminate these weapons in order to prevent nuclear war. ... However, the delineation between agenda items 2 and 3 of the Conference on Disarmament has remained somewhat unclear. Very often, similar issues have been discussed under both agenda items. Proposals have been made to merge the two items again."

In 1984, the Conference on Disarmament also established a contact group, which submitted, in document CD/515, a proposal on this agenda item with only one consequential paragraph: "The Conference requests the ad hoc committee, as a first step, to consider all proposals relevant to agenda item 3, including appropriate and practical measures for the prevention of nuclear war. The ad hoc committee will take into account all existing proposals and future initiatives and report on its work to the Conference on Disarmament before the end of its 1984 session."

Mr. President, even this seemingly anodyne proposal was shot down by a group of States belonging to a military alliance. Their rationale, as documented by the Conference on Disarmament report, document CD/540, of the same year, stated, *inter alia*, "The terms in which the agenda item had been formulated clearly meant that the prevention of nuclear war could not be dealt with separately from the prevention of war itself, including conventional war. What was at issue, in their view, was the problem of how to maintain peace and international security in the nuclear age. The view was expressed that it was therefore particularly necessary to reflect upon concepts of security and to develop the concept of cooperative security as an essential objective of our time."

In fact, some States suggested that an appropriate framing of the item would entirely include assessment of the risk of an outbreak of armed conflict in general and nuclear war in particular, the prohibition in the Charter of the United Nations of the threat or use of force as an obligation on all States to maintain a policy of restraint, military doctrines, security guarantees, regional security arrangements, significance of military balance, stability and undiminished security of all States and effectiveness of measures to stop the further development, testing and deployment of certain weapon categories.

Mr. President, over the years, other States have also stressed the need to see this item in the context of, *inter alia*, exclusion of the use of force, avoidance of any surprise attack or of the accidental or unauthorized use or spread of nuclear arms to other spheres, including outer space, the need for a decreasing level of armaments, peaceful settlement of disputes and a broader treaty on the prevention of war.

Yet this item, like its progenitor, has not seen any progress either. In fact, there has been a palpable regression, owing largely to the concerted efforts of a few to try and force the item into cost-free measures and illusory pursuits that distract from the larger goals of nuclear disarmament and prevention of nuclear war. It is also clear that some militarily significant States have chosen to set aside the fundamental elements of the agenda item to escape scrutiny for non-compliance with their legal obligations.

Mr. President, the notion of the prevention of nuclear war is therefore, as we can see, grounded in two interconnected streams. The first one is nuclear disarmament as a means to achieve the larger objective of preventing nuclear war. My delegation delved into the salience of nuclear disarmament in detail last week. The second aspect is measures to prevent nuclear

war until the elimination of nuclear weapons is achieved. And this brings me to the question of how and why this agenda item is relevant, not only to the work of this Conference, but also to achieving the goal of preventing a nuclear war.

My delegation and others have previously drawn attention to the rising geopolitical tensions, the growing strategic asymmetries, the pursuit of absolute security and domination by powerful States, the rise in global military expenditure, which has exceeded even cold-war levels, and the modernization programmes for conventional and non-conventional weaponry which are in full swing. Concurrently, the rise in the weaponization, integration and operationalization of artificial intelligence, space and cybertechnologies is accentuating risks, driving the arms race and fuelling antagonism among great Powers. Together, these enhance risks and act as triggers that mean that nuclear war is not just science fiction, but a plausible possible future. These developments add to the urgency of taking up this item with the seriousness and focus that it deserves, as they impinge on the prospects of preventing a nuclear war, particularly in situations of asymmetry in conventional and nuclear capabilities.

Mr. President, against this backdrop, it is essential that any serious effort aimed at preventing a nuclear war analyse the actual security conditions prevailing at the global and regional levels. The geopolitical environment shaping the security perspective of States, as well as conflict resolution, has to form an important part of the conversation.

It is important to remember that conflicts do not exist because of nuclear weapons. While there may be exceptions, in which a State's pursuit of nuclear weapons is driven primarily by considerations of status and power, in most cases, States have been forced to rely on nuclear deterrence in the wake of existential threats to security, lingering disputes, and power asymmetry.

Mr. President, let me now turn to what this Conference needs to do to avert the risks of a nuclear war.

First, it is paramount that this agenda item be pursued in line with its true intent and that proposals based on narrow national positions to limit the item to peripheral concentrations and non-proliferation measures alone should be discarded.

Second, the deliberation phase of the Conference proceedings must revert to the fundamentals, that is, addressing security concerns and threat perceptions covering traditional military – both nuclear and non-nuclear – and non-military threats, and deal with regional asymmetries and destabilizing arms build-up, in both the strategic and the conventional realms.

Third, the Conference must promote reaffirmed effective universal application of the principle of refraining from the threat or use of force in international relations to reduce the danger of war, in particular nuclear war.

Fourth, it must encourage commitment to the principle of peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict resolution and addressing long-standing disputes to prevent the development of situations that could lead to dangerous exacerbation in relations among States.

Fifth, the Conference must examine the nature of security doctrines, both offensive and defensive, and their role in strategic stability. States must refrain from adopting doctrines and concepts that could endanger international peace, lead to a deterioration in the international situation or further intensification of the arms race and which are detrimental to the recognized necessity of international cooperation for disarmament. Military doctrines that envisage making pre-emptive use of force or of nuclear weapons, resorting to surprise attacks against other States or fighting a limited conventional war under the nuclear overhang must be renounced.

And lastly, it must address the role of extraregional players, their geopolitical objectives and implications for global and regional strategic stability.

Mr. President, while risk reduction measures and transparency and confidence-building measures have a positive correlation with peace and security, and we recognize their value, they should be used neither as an excuse not to fulfil legal obligations nor as a smokescreen to deflect commencement of negotiations on nuclear disarmament. Complete

elimination of the prospect of nuclear war remains tied to pursuing nuclear disarmament, which, despite commitments made, has not seen any multilateral progress.

Until we reach that stage, work on this agenda item along the lines I have outlined above would be key. By working on these original fundamentals, we can hopefully start moving in a direction that will enable the Conference on Disarmament to earnestly pursue the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world in a universal, verifiable, time-bound and non-discriminatory manner.

The President: I thank the distinguished delegate of Pakistan for his statement and now I invite the next speaker, the distinguished delegate of Norway, Mr. Christian Rydning, to take the floor.

Mr. Rydning (Norway): Mr. President, I congratulate you on assuming the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and thank you for all the work you have done to ensure that the Conference is able to conduct substantive work despite the lack of a programme of work. I would also like to thank the panellists, Mr. Wan and Ms. Mackby, for their excellent presentations. They made some chilling observations and it is evident that the issue of risk reduction is a subject of the highest importance in its own right, as a step towards nuclear disarmament.

The Non-Proliferation Treaty is at the cornerstone of the global disarmament and the non-proliferation regime and has served global security well for more than half a century. The Treaty Review Conference will be a good opportunity to confirm our commitments, and continued efforts to implement commitments made at previous review conferences are crucial.

We would like to see a reaffirmation of the vitality of the Treaty, to pay tribute to the fundamental contributions it has made to global security and to underline its continued relevance. But that is the minimum. We also need to look forward and have some ambition. And we must look for concrete actions that will take us a step closer to nuclear disarmament and work hard on garnering consensus on them. We have had a rich discussion on nuclear disarmament verification over the past two-and-a-half Conference on Disarmament sessions and Norway considers that all the good work done over the last few years should and can benefit the Review Conference.

As for the topic at hand today – risk reduction – the action plan agreed at the 2010 Review Conference highlights the need to do more, to avoid the risk of using nuclear weapons. Norway supported General Assembly resolution 75/72 on decreasing the operational readiness of nuclear weapons systems, and we would like to see action-oriented language on risk reduction at the Review Conference.

As part of the Stockholm Initiative on Nuclear Disarmament, we are promoting the working paper on risk reduction that was presented by our Swiss colleague this morning. It is a clear and solid road map on how to take forward multilateral work on risk reduction, both within the context of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and in a multilateral forum like the Conference on Disarmament. And I would like to thank and congratulate Switzerland on authoring this succinct, lucid and most persuasive paper; we encourage all States to support it.

The President: I thank the Norwegian delegate for his statement, and now I give the floor to the distinguished delegate of the Republic of Korea, Ms. Choi Soonhee.

Ms. Choi Soonhee (Republic of Korea): Mr. President, I would like to begin by assuring you of my delegation's full support for and cooperation in your endeavours to make progress in our work. I would also like to extend my appreciation to Mr. Wilfred Wan and Ms. Jenifer Mackby for their informative presentations this morning.

I believe that today's thematic discussion on agenda item 2, focusing on nuclear risk reduction, gives us a valuable chance to deepen our understanding of the role of risk reduction in the process towards nuclear disarmament. We once again welcome and support the President's leadership in deciding to hold this discussion, which we believe will also contribute to enhancing the relevance of the Conference on Disarmament in the current international security environment.

Mr. President, as a strong upholder of the Non-Proliferation Treaty regime and as a State in full compliance with the Treaty, the Republic of Korea reaffirms its commitment to achieving the shared goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. While a nuclear-weapon-free world is an aspiration shared by all humanity, we are faced with a deteriorating international security environment, in which the leadership and sincerity of nuclear-weapon States is being increasingly questioned by many non-nuclear weapon States.

My delegation believes that, in achieving a nuclear-free world, one of the most urgent tasks would be bridging the gap of trust and confidence among States, especially between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States.

Given the circumstances, the importance of reducing the risk of nuclear weapons being used either by miscalculation or by misunderstanding has been broadly recognized by the international community. Korea is actively participating in the international efforts in this regard.

The Stockholm Initiative on Nuclear Disarmament, among others, has identified practical stepping stones towards the reduction of nuclear risks, as several previous speakers have already highlighted. In this respect, Korea appreciates and welcomes the submission of the working paper entitled “A Nuclear Risk Reduction Package” by our Swiss colleague, as presented by the Ambassador of Switzerland this morning under the Stockholm Initiative, in which my country also participates. We also believe that the Creating an Environment for Nuclear Disarmament initiative plays an important role in this regard by focusing on nuclear risk reduction in one of its subgroups and, more importantly, by bringing nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States together in the context of its exercises.

Korea is also of the view that enhanced communication among the five nuclear-weapon States is another element of utmost importance in reducing the risk of nuclear weapons being used. We hope that the ongoing discussion among those States in working towards the success of the upcoming Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference can lead to further practical measures which will be implemented. We also hope that progress made within the five nuclear-weapon States will, in due course, be shared with other States in order to help build trust between nuclear-weapons States and non-nuclear-weapons States.

Last, but not least, my delegation hopes that the outcome document of the upcoming tenth Review Conference will duly capture the importance and the role of nuclear risk reduction and include practical measures to be implemented towards the shared goal of a nuclear-free world.

The President: I thank the distinguished delegate of the Republic of Korea and I give the floor to the next speaker, Ambassador Pankaj Sharma of India.

Mr. Sharma (India): Mr. President, India has always approached the issue of nuclear risk reduction in a global context and has consistently maintained that global issues like nuclear disarmament and nuclear risk reduction cannot be treated in a regional context, as suggested by some.

As mentioned during the last plenary meeting, every year since 1998, India has tabled a resolution in the General Assembly on reducing nuclear danger, which is supported by the vast majority of Member States. It calls for, inter alia, a review of nuclear doctrines and, in this context, immediate and urgent steps to reduce the risk of unintentional and accidental use of nuclear weapons, including through de-alerting and de-targeting nuclear weapons. It calls on Member States to take the measures necessary to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons in all its aspects and to promote nuclear disarmament, with the objective of eliminating all nuclear weapons.

Similarly, I would like once again to make a reference to India’s working paper on nuclear disarmament, CD/1816, submitted to the Conference in 2007, which suggested a number of important steps that are yet to be undertaken by the relevant States.

India stands ready to play its part and expects that other States will do so too, so as to lead us to a nuclear-weapon-free world, which is the only guarantee of avoiding any risk of nuclear weapons.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of India for his statement. He was the last speaker on the list of speakers for today. Would any other delegation like to take the floor?

That does not seem to be the case. Before we conclude our thematic discussion, I would like to give our panellists an opportunity to respond to some of the statements and make comments if they so wish. I will first give the floor to Mr. Wan.

Mr. Wan (United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research): I am very heartened to see the levels of engagement, interest and support for the topic of nuclear risk reduction. I want to make a very quick comment on the relationship between risk reduction and nuclear disarmament, as some concerns have been expressed on that subject. I want to underline that risk reduction cannot substitute for disarmament, as the risk of nuclear weapon use exists so long as nuclear weapons do. Still, risk reduction can help to revitalize arms control and disarmament efforts, including by refocusing attention on existing disarmament obligations and commitments.

In addition, concrete steps to prevent the use of nuclear weapons so as to diminish the role and significance of nuclear weapons in military and security concepts, doctrines and policies certainly go hand in hand with stockpile reductions and nuclear disarmament.

Our work on these topics continues at the Institute. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us – we are always happy to engage with you. Thank you again for giving me the opportunity to speak here today.

The President: I thank Mr. Wan for his comments and now I would like to give the floor to Ms. Mackby for any final comments or observations.

Ms. Mackby (Federation of American Scientists): Mr. President, I would like to thank all the delegations for their kind words about our presentations. I noted that a number of delegations mentioned advanced technologies in cyberspace and space and the implications on strategic stability. I hope that those discussions will continue in the Conference on Disarmament and, of course, that the Conference will adopt a work programme at some point soon.

The Federation of American Scientists has been devoted to these issues for many years, so I hope we will continue to work with you.

The President: I thank Ms. Mackby for her comments and I would like again to thank our panellists for their participation today and for their very substantive and meaningful contributions. Thank you too to all the delegations that took part in the debate. I think it was a very important and meaningful discussion; I am looking forward to continuing our discussions under agenda item 2.

Distinguished colleagues, our next plenary meeting is scheduled to take place at 10 a.m. on 20 May, when we will continue our discussion on agenda item 2.

This meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 3.55 p.m.