

Conference on Disarmament

English

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

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 15 March 2016, at 10.05 a.m.

President: Mr. Steffen Kongstad (Norway)

The President: I call to order the 1382nd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I am pleased to inform you that we have received a request from a delegation wishing to participate in our work as a non-member State. That request is before you as document CD/WP.593/Add.3. Are there any comments on this request? I take it that the Conference decides to invite the Plurinational State of Bolivia to participate in our work in accordance with the rules of procedure.

It was so decided.

The President: I will now suspend the meeting for a brief moment in order to allow the representatives of the Plurinational State of Bolivia to take their seats in the Council Chamber.

The meeting was briefly suspended.

The President: The meeting is resumed. Before I continue, I wish to inform you that there will be a plenary meeting on Thursday, 17 March, at 10 a.m. in this room.

As you all know, after last week's plenary meeting we held informal open-ended consultations on all the proposals for a programme of work in the afternoon of 8 March. I wish to thank all the delegations who participated in these consultations for their valuable inputs.

I now open the floor to any delegation that wishes to comment on our programme of work or to make a statement on whatever they so wish. On the list of speakers I have the representative of Algeria, Mr. Djouama. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. Djouama (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, allow me at the outset to congratulate you on behalf of the Algerian delegation on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and to assure you of our support and cooperation. I would like to take this opportunity to thank your predecessor, Mr. Emuze, for his remarkable work and his efforts to create the necessary conditions for the Conference to adopt a programme of work. I would also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Michael Møller, and his team for their efforts and for how they have supported our work. We extend our thanks as well to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Kim Won-soo, whose presence at the opening of this session was a testament to the continued commitment of the United Nations to disarmament. I would also like to extend a warm welcome to the Acting Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Soliman, and the newly accredited Ambassadors to the Conference on Disarmament. May their stay here in Geneva be a success. Algeria aligns itself with the statement delivered by Kenya on behalf of the Group of 21.

Algeria attaches great importance to the Conference on Disarmament as the single multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament matters, and it is concerned about the current impasse. We maintain that this impasse is not attributable to shortcomings in the functioning of the Conference or its rules of procedure, but rather to a lack of true, renewed commitment from member States to address all the issues on the agenda of the Conference. It is therefore important that we, as member States, live up to the aspirations of the international community, which transcend our own security agendas and respective interests and which call on us to embrace the spirit of dialogue, including for the purposes of adopting a comprehensive and balanced programme of work, similar to the spirit of cooperation that led to the adoption of the decision contained in document CD/1864 in 2009.

My delegation reaffirms the commitment of Algeria to actively contribute to all efforts to build a solid and unalterable foundation for peace and security, which naturally calls for cooperation in support of collective security based on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. We are prepared to participate in any initiative likely to revitalize the work of the Conference. We are all aware of the danger posed by nuclear weapons, not only to international peace and security but also to the very existence of humankind. They are therefore the key priority that we must address. My delegation reiterates the position consistently taken by my country, which continues to advocate for nuclear non-proliferation

and disarmament in different international forums. It is in this spirit that Algeria supported the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly of the United Nations on this issue.

Algeria shares the objectives set out in the resolutions addressing new issues adopted at the seventieth session, namely resolution 70/33 on taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, resolution 70/47 on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, resolution 70/48 on the humanitarian pledge for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons, resolution 70/50 on ethical imperatives for a nuclear-weapon-free world and resolution 70/57 on the Universal Declaration on the Achievement of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World. Algeria will actively participate in the deliberations to be held within the Open-ended Working Group to substantively address concrete effective legal measures, legal provisions and norms that will need to be concluded to attain and maintain a world without nuclear weapons, in the hope that this process marks a turning point in the work of the Conference.

Algeria honours its commitments under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which is the cornerstone of disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons. We wish to reiterate the call for compliance with the Treaty and the effective implementation of all its provisions, as well as for all States that have not yet ratified it to do so. My delegation wishes to draw attention to the obligation to give effect to the decisions taken within the framework of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, including those taken in 1995 and under the 2010 action plan relating to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, following the example of the other nuclear-weapon-free zones, such as that established in Africa under the Treaty of Pelindaba, to which Algeria is a party.

Algeria is firmly committed to nuclear disarmament. It urges nuclear-weapon States to honour the commitments made to eliminate their nuclear arsenals and to comply with the formal obligations flowing from article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which were confirmed in the July 1996 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on — and I quote — the “obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control”. The Conference should also be in a position to address the legitimate security demands of non-nuclear-weapon States in terms of negative security assurances in a legally binding international instrument prohibiting, in a clear and credible manner, the use or threat of use under any circumstances of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States.

In the same vein, the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the conclusion of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for manufacturing nuclear weapons would also be highly relevant. My delegation wishes to recall the relevance of the Outer Space Treaty of 1967 and shares the view that the draft Treaty on Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space, proposed by China and the Russian Federation, and the draft International Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities, proposed by the European Union, are promising ways forward. We maintain that preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons should not undermine the sovereign right of States to access nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

My delegation welcomes the momentum that has characterized our work at the beginning of the session, as evidenced by the number and creativity of proposals submitted for a programme of work. We would like to commend the efforts of the sponsoring States in drafting these proposals, which reflect the good faith and consideration that they show towards the Conference. These proposals are being examined with all due attention. We consider the proposal of Nigeria to have the advantage of addressing in a comprehensive and balanced manner the four core items on the agenda and that it could provide a good starting point for consultations based on the consensus reached thus far, enabling us to continue to work on substantive issues within the Conference, pending an agreement on technical elements for possible negotiations. We also welcome with interest the proposal submitted by the Russian Federation, which is well intentioned and is aimed at initiating the process of negotiating, within the Conference on Disarmament, a multilateral instrument for the suppression of chemical terrorism, as well as discussions with a view to identifying, elaborating and recommending effective measures relating to the four core issues dealt with

by the Conference on Disarmament. Given the complex and technical nature of the first issue, we think it wise to hold consultations in New York and The Hague to clarify the issue further.

The President: I thank the representative of Algeria for his statement. The next speaker on the list is the representative of Canada. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. Davison (Canada): Mr. President, we thank the Russian Federation for its contribution of a new programme of work proposal to try to break the deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament. We, too, are anxious for the Conference to resume its disarmament work. It is the view of Canada, however, that any consideration of a convention on the suppression of acts of chemical terrorism in the Conference is unnecessarily duplicative. The issue of non-State actors and the application of the Chemical Weapons Convention to them, or States' obligations to prevent access to chemical weapons by non-State actors, is already the subject of a working group of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). That process must first be completed and its outcomes assessed before any decision is taken on what further actions may be required. Without prejudging the outcome of the OPCW working group, we remain unconvinced that new legally binding measures are necessary. We are confident that agreement among States parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention to fully implement preventative measures under the Convention should be sufficient to prevent non-State actors from acquiring precursor chemicals.

If a new legally binding instrument was needed, this would be better addressed in the context of the Chemical Weapons Convention as a protocol, rather than as a stand-alone instrument negotiated in the Conference on Disarmament.

Finally, the United Nations Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings — with 168 States parties — already contains provisions requiring States parties to criminalize the use of devices using chemicals by individuals, together with ancillary offences. The Convention also contains provisions on mutual legal assistance, information-sharing and prosecution and extradition.

The President: I thank the representative of Canada for his statement. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? I recognize Switzerland; you have the floor, Ambassador.

Mr. Schmid (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, I would like to express my appreciation for the able manner in which you are performing your functions and for all your efforts to break the stalemate which has prevailed within the Conference on Disarmament for almost 20 years.

We have before us a number of draft programmes of work. This somewhat unprecedented situation is to be welcomed insofar as it demonstrates the interest of the members of the Conference in finding a way to move forward. Prompt action on the basis of these proposals is now necessary if we are to harness this positive momentum, and bearing in mind how far along we now are in the year.

Allow me to make the following few points in that connection. We thank the Russian Federation for its innovative proposal to focus our work on the negotiation of an instrument for the suppression of acts of chemical terrorism. As evidenced by the first exchange that we had on this subject, there is a whole range of issues that still need to be clarified before we decide whether the Conference on Disarmament should embark on that path. This applies, for example, to the issue of the legal gap that we are attempting to fill. In this connection, we ought to recall that the prohibition of any attack involving the use of chemical weapons by State or non-State actors is clearly established in international law, be it by treaty or customary law. There is also a need to clarify whether the Conference is the most appropriate forum in which to negotiate such an issue. We very much look forward to receiving the explanatory note addressing these and other issues that the Russian Federation will submit in the coming weeks.

However, the fact remains that clarifying the various outstanding issues will require much effort and a certain amount of time, all for an uncertain outcome. It would therefore seem wise and timely to move forward on two fronts simultaneously by adopting, without

further delay, a programme of work focusing on the core issues of the Conference's agenda while continuing to examine the proposal to start negotiations on an instrument for the suppression of acts of chemical terrorism. Such an approach would allow the Conference to begin work promptly while maintaining the possibility of opening negotiations during the year if the consultations on the proposal submitted by the Russian Federation proved to be conclusive.

The proposal put forward by the United Kingdom seems the most conducive to adopting a programme of work without further delay. As we pointed out a few weeks ago, a programme of work should, to our mind, launch negotiations or, at the very least, enable us to move in that direction. From our point of view, the draft programme of work proposed by the United Kingdom seems to respond more fully to this requirement by setting the objective of identifying, elaborating and recommending effective measures, including measures of a legal nature. In addition, the fact that it places nuclear disarmament at the centre of discussions while leaving us free to address all the core issues on the Conference's agenda seems to provide a novel approach to remedying the factors contributing to the long-standing stalemate within the Conference.

In short, at this stage, we believe that it is essential to move quickly if the Conference on Disarmament wishes to avoid prolonging by another year the already long-standing impasse. Adopting without further delay a programme of work covering the four core issues of the agenda while continuing to examine the proposal submitted by the Russian Federation and maintaining the possibility of adopting a negotiating mandate over the course of the year if the exchanges on the subject prove to be conclusive seems to us to be the most pragmatic approach in the current situation. This would also respond to the call made by several delegations for a compilation of the various proposals before us.

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

Mr. Deyneko (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would first of all like to convey my condolences to the people of Turkey following the horrific terrorist attack in the country's capital, Ankara. We convey our condolences to the relatives and loved ones of those who died and our sympathies to the families of the victims.

Coming back to the work of the Conference on Disarmament, we are grateful to the Norwegian presidency for organizing informal consultations, in both large and small groups, which were conducted in an open and transparent manner. In our view, these consultations were characterized by a constructive approach and real effort to find a way out of the difficult situation in which the Conference finds itself. Regrettably, for one reason or another, not all delegations were able to take part in the consultations, but we hope that they will be able to do so in the near future.

We are grateful to the delegations for their high praise for our initiative, and we appreciate the complexity and enormity of the challenges presented by the initiative of the Russian Federation for the Conference on Disarmament to draft an international convention on the suppression of acts of chemical terrorism. In this connection, we would like to make a number of comments that should give delegations a better understanding of the basis for our proposals.

Firstly, regarding the contemporary relevance of the initiative, the problem of chemical terrorism has an exceptional contemporary relevance in the light of the repeated use by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant in the Middle East not only of industrial toxic chemicals, but also of full-blown chemical warfare agents. I would like to bring this matter to the attention of those present. It has been reported that terrorists have access to infrastructure that could be used to create chemical weapons. Such activities are becoming ever more widespread, endemic and transnational in nature. Chemical terrorism has already become a reality requiring us to act decisively and strategically on the basis of clearly defined and comprehensive international rules.

Secondly, concerning the legal basis for the initiative, there is no convincing evidence of the existence of rules of international customary law explicitly prohibiting the

use of chemical weapons by non-State actors and in particular of rules establishing that such acts constitute an international crime.

The Chemical Weapons Convention provides for a very limited set of circumstances in which a person can be criminally prosecuted for conducting the activities that it prohibits. The Chemical Weapons Convention regime does not fully meet current requirements and standards in the suppression of terrorism.

International humanitarian law by its nature applies only to situations of armed conflict and contains specific requirements regarding the non-State actors to which its rules can be extended. This excludes the application of international humanitarian law to broad categories of terrorist activities.

The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which establishes that the use of asphyxiating, poisonous or other gases and all analogous liquids, materials or devices is a military crime, has not been ratified by nearly 70 States parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention. The rules that it contains cannot be considered as universal. Furthermore, it applies only to situations of international armed conflict. The Amendments to the Rome Statute on the crime of aggression (Kampala Amendments), which extend the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court to internal conflicts, have been ratified by only 30 States in total, but, even for those countries, the rules of the Rome Statute do not apply to situations of internal disturbances and tensions that do not constitute armed conflict.

Of course, a major universal instrument in the sphere of the non-proliferation of chemical weapons is United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). While it deals with illicit trafficking in chemical materials and their means of delivery, it is nevertheless focused on the adoption of domestic measures to prevent chemical weapons or their components from falling into the hands of terrorists. Furthermore, the resolution does not cover the current situation in which terrorists have attempted to obtain access to such weapons and associated production facilities in the territories under their control. It would appear that a new convention could remedy these serious problems.

One other instrument relating to chemical weapons is the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings of 15 December 1997, but that instrument is limited in scope. Firstly, it deals with the use of lethal devices; secondly, it states specific places of use; and thirdly, it addresses intent to cause death, serious bodily injury or extensive destruction to the facilities specified in the Convention.

The operation of our proposed convention would not be subject to such limitations. Other special rules could also be established, for example on the handling of chemical weapons seized from terrorists.

Amending the Chemical Weapons Convention to address the problem is not the best solution, particularly in view of the complicated mechanism by which amendments to the Convention are adopted. Specifically, pursuant to article 15 of the Convention, the support of 64 States parties is required merely to convene an Amendment Conference. The adoption of amendments requires the agreement of 97 participants with no State party casting a negative vote. Their entry into force requires their adoption or ratification by all States that cast a positive vote. With this in mind, and in the interests of preserving the integrity of the Chemical Weapons Convention, we consider it essential to respond to the challenge through a separate legally binding instrument.

A new convention on chemical terrorism could incorporate all the developments enshrined in the international instruments on counter-terrorism approved over the previous 10 years. In particular, it should include a provision criminalizing the acts that fall within its scope and a definition of its jurisdiction, provide an appropriate legal response, ensure implementation of the principle of *aut dedere aut judicare* and so forth.

Thirdly, concerning the rationale for the Conference on Disarmament as the negotiating forum for the convention, we cannot deny that there is a whole range of international forums that might aspire to draw up a convention on the suppression of acts of chemical terrorism. Our reason for giving preference to the Conference is that its agenda originally included not only issues relating to disarmament itself, but also many other aspects connected with the maintenance of international security in general. For instance,

the Conference's first agenda, contained in document CD/12, adopted by the Committee on Disarmament in the spring of 1979, provided for discussions on nuclear and chemical disarmament as well as on other arms control measures, including confidence-building measures and effective verification methods for monitoring compliance with disarmament obligations. The document remained unamended right up until the conclusion of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Thus, in accordance with the Conference's original mandate, the forum had the authority to deal with a wide range of contemporary arms control and non-proliferation issues. At the current stage, such issues cannot be considered in depth without taking into account the problem of how to counter international terrorism. Furthermore, it was in the Conference on Disarmament that the Chemical Weapons Convention was drawn up. In the current situation it would make sense for certain gaps relating to terrorism to be filled in the Conference, too.

Our proposal straddles disarmament, non-proliferation and counter-terrorism issues. The problem of suppressing chemical terrorism undoubtedly has a disarmament as well as a non-proliferation dimension. If terrorist groups acquire a production base, infrastructure and chemicals for the production of chemical weapons, it is only a matter of time before they create, distribute and use them. Given the transnational nature and ever-increasing threat of terrorism, the targets and scale of terrorist attacks involving the use of chemical weapons will not always follow established patterns and could become more widespread and barbaric, with provocative actions and punitive measures against undesirables and dissenters. Moreover, the expansion of the access of non-State actors to chemical weapons components weakens the regime of the Chemical Weapons Convention and of the other instruments that have any connection with chemical disarmament.

One more important point: our proposal to draft a convention on the suppression of acts of chemical terrorism could revitalize the Conference itself, as, for nearly 20 years, States parties have been unable to reach agreement on a programme of work for negotiations. In our view, negotiations on such a convention will become a topic on which compromise can be reached: that will bring us together and help to get the Conference out of its impasse.

The Russian Federation calls on member States of the Conference to give careful consideration to the initiative and to support it actively. We are prepared to work intensively together with delegations on the elements of the future text.

Mr. President, distinguished colleagues, this is the document that has been prepared by our colleagues in Moscow. Once we have registered it as an official document of the Conference, we intend to distribute it among the membership without delay. I hope that the document contains answers to most, if not all, of your questions. Going forward, the Russian delegation is willing to have very close contact and consultations in various settings with a view to identifying the best way of launching negotiations on this draft. In this connection, I would like to note that, from the outset, the Russian Federation has chosen to present the documentation on which its proposal is based. Let us compare our proposal with the other proposals put forward for the programme of work. To this end, we call on our colleagues who have also put forward proposals for an initiative relating to the programme of work to present the documentation on which their proposals are based. It seems to us that this is a matter worth reflecting on.

The President: I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for his statement. The next speaker on the list is the representative of Italy. Ambassador, you have the floor.

Mr. Mati (Italy): At the outset, Mr. President, I would like to thank you for your endeavours in trying to reach an agreed way forward for this year's session of the Conference on Disarmament and I assure you of my delegation's continued full support. In particular, we appreciate your efforts in conducting a wide range of consultations, in both bilateral and multilateral formats, in order to facilitate the achievement of consensus.

Late last week, we were informed by the current coordinator for the Group of Western European and Other States — the Israeli delegation, which we warmly thank for its effectiveness in fulfilling this mandate — that you convened further multilateral

informal consultations in a restricted format, which we understand did not lead to any breakthrough.

Concerning this meeting held in a restricted format, Mr. President, allow me to make a procedural point. We cannot but note that, during the 2016 session, each Conference President has adopted different criteria relating to participation in restricted meetings — criteria that, at least in our perception, are not always clear. I do not, of course, wish to question the prerogatives of the presidency. At the same time, I wonder if this is the best way to ensure the necessary inclusiveness and transparency of this process with a view to increasing its effectiveness. Therefore, Mr. President, allow me to suggest that the next informal meetings or informal consultations be kept open to “all interested States” in accordance with the consolidated practice of previous years.

Turning to the substance, we currently have four proposals for a programme of work on the table. In our view, this is an important sign of member States’ determination to get the Conference back to work. Italy has already made a constructive contribution by expressing its support, first of all, for the draft programme of work introduced by the delegation of the United States, which is in line with our priority of commencing negotiations on a treaty dealing with fissile materials without preconditions. We are still firmly convinced that a fissile material treaty remains the next logical step in the path towards nuclear disarmament.

We also consider the proposals put forth by the United Kingdom and the Nigerian delegations as genuine efforts to overcome the deadlock in the Conference. We expressed our preference for the United Kingdom draft programme as, in our view, it embodies a pragmatic and flexible approach allowing different ideas and inputs to be presented and that also provides for greater involvement of civil society in the work of the Conference.

As for the Russian proposal, we recognize that it has the merit of addressing a serious and real problem, such as the threat posed by acts of chemical terrorism, which affects all States and is a matter of concern for the international community as a whole. From our perspective, we are open to continuing discussions on this important subject with a view to further exploring the different aspects of the proposal in the framework of the Conference, if there is consensus, or in the framework of other venues with relevant expertise, such as New York or The Hague.

Like others, we are mindful of the importance and urgency of overcoming the Conference’s stalemate and, for this reason, we stand ready to support any possible and reasonable compromise on the way ahead with a view to allowing the Conference to adopt a programme of work for its 2016 session.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Italy for his statement. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? I recognize the representative of Turkey; you have the floor, Madam.

Ms. Kasnakli (Turkey): Mr. President, I have asked for the floor to thank the delegations and colleagues who have expressed their condolences after the heinous terrorist attack that took place in Ankara on Sunday. These words of solidarity mean a lot to my delegation. Turkey is resolutely committed to the fight against terrorism.

At this time, I will not go into the details of the proposal made by Russia regarding a programme of work. We voiced our views last week in the plenary. We are still examining the draft and, as I said before, we will be looking at the other areas of work that is already being conducted. We would not like to hamper the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, but we are ready to hear more opinions on the issue.

The President: I thank the representative of Turkey for her statement. I recognize the representative of the United Kingdom. You have the floor, Ambassador.

Mr. Rowland (United Kingdom): Mr. President, I would like to thank the Russian delegation for the explanation that has just been given, which was a lengthy explanation. I think the explanation shows just how many instruments will need to be considered when attempting to identify legal gaps that might exist regarding the use of chemical weapons by

terrorists. And, of course, none of those instruments are dealt with by the community here in Geneva.

This complexity and the lack of familiarity with the issues means it will take considerable time for delegations to assess the Russian proposal: several weeks, perhaps even several months. We would rather not see the Conference on Disarmament remain idle to the eyes of those outside during that time, and we do find some merit in the Swiss suggestion. The United Kingdom proposal is not meant to be exclusive and makes quite clear in operative paragraph 7 that, should member States agree a mandate to negotiate a specific legal instrument, further working groups could be established to that end. We would encourage all to bear that in mind as we go forward, and let me thank you again for your efforts over the past few weeks to move us on.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of the United Kingdom for his statement. I see no other delegation wishing to take the floor.

Before concluding, I understand that Ambassador Kim Young-moo of the Republic of Korea would like to take the floor. You have the floor, Ambassador.

Mr. Kim Young-moo (Republic of Korea): Mr. President, I am taking the floor to say goodbye to my colleagues at the Conference on Disarmament. According to my capital's instructions, I will be moving to the position of Deputy Permanent Representative for Economic Affairs, focusing mainly on issues related to the World Trade Organization. My successor, Ambassador Kim In-chul, who will take my place beginning next week, is the former Director General for International Legal Affairs and thus has full expertise in the field of international law. I believe that he can contribute to the Conference by bringing a valuable legal perspective.

It is our belief that the Conference on Disarmament has an important role to play in promoting international security by fulfilling its mandate. We hope that we will achieve agreement on a programme of work and start substantial negotiations as soon as possible. In this regard, I would like to thank the President and other Ambassadors for their hard work to create common ground to revitalize the Conference. Korea, as the last President of this year's session of the Conference, will also do its utmost to move these negotiations forward so that we have something substantial to be noted in our annual report.

It has been an honour and privilege for me to represent my country at the Conference on Disarmament, even though it was a very short period of time. I am leaving with many good memories of the Conference in Geneva and the First Committee in New York. Above all, I am deeply grateful to have had this opportunity to meet and work with excellent colleagues here in this room. Since I am leaving the Conference but not leaving Geneva, I am sure that I will still be able to see you around at diplomatic ceremonies or other occasions. I will look forward to hearing updates on the Conference's work, especially some good news about progress on the programme of work.

Lastly, Mr. President, I would like to thank all colleagues here, the secretariat and the interpreters, and I wish them every success in their future endeavours.

The President: I thank Ambassador Kim for his statement and all his contributions to the work of the Conference on Disarmament, not least as a member of the group of six Presidents for this session. I wish him, on behalf of all the members of the Conference, all the best in his future role and responsibilities.

We have one additional speaker on the list, which is the representative of Japan. Ambassador, you have the floor.

Mr. Sano (Japan): Mr. President, I just want to take the floor to bid farewell to Ambassador Kim Young-moo of the Republic of Korea. Ambassador Kim has demonstrated his professionalism while trying to overcome differences between member States on various occasions. This is not a definite farewell, since he will continue his assignment here in Geneva. Nonetheless, I wish him all the best in his new endeavours and responsibilities.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Japan for his statement.

This concludes our business this morning. As I said at the beginning, the next plenary meeting will be held this coming Thursday, 17 March, at 10 a.m. in this chamber. The meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.