

# CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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## FINAL RECORD OF THE ONE THOUSAND AND FIRST PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,  
on Thursday, 2 February 2006, at 10.15 a.m.

President:

Mr. Zdzisław RAPACKI

(Poland)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 1001st plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

At the outset, I would like to extend a cordial welcome to Ambassador Sameh Hassan Shoukry, who has recently assumed his responsibilities as the representative of Egypt to the Conference on Disarmament. I wish to take this opportunity to assure him of our cooperation and support in his new assignment.

Before we proceed to our debate, I should like to draw your attention to the requests of Denmark and Oman to participate in the work of the Conference during this session, which are contained in document CD/WP.541/Add.2, which is before you. In accordance with established practice, I invite you to take a decision on these requests without first having considered them in an informal plenary.

May I take it that the Conference decides to invite Denmark and Oman to participate in our work in accordance with the rules of procedure?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I have 10 speakers for today's plenary meeting: the first to take the floor is India, followed by Indonesia, the Russian Federation, Sri Lanka, France, Switzerland, Italy, Romania, Japan and Australia. However, before giving them the floor, I would like to make a statement.

As I informed you earlier, and as the period of two weeks required for the adoption of the programme of work comes to an end, I wish to inform you about the results of the bilateral consultations which I conducted with all the CD delegations.

As mandated by the CD at the end of its 2005 session, the then current and incoming CD Presidents conducted informal consultations on the possibilities of reaching consensus on a programme of work. The delegation of Peru informed us of its findings at the informal open-ended consultations held on 13 December 2005. The Peruvian delegation came to the conclusion that, at that time, it was impossible to reach consensus on a programme of work for the Conference based on existing proposals - formal or informal. In my capacity as the incoming CD President, and, following 1 January, as the current President, I have conducted numerous consultations. In recent weeks I have consulted bilaterally with all CD delegations. I would like to present the results of those consultations.

The main purpose of those consultations was to check whether there was any change in the positions of member States concerning a programme of work. I tried to check for the readiness of delegations to accept the ideas in this chamber, including those contained in the A-5 proposal and the recent Peruvian proposal, as well as in the non-paper presented last year by Ambassador Sanders of the Netherlands. Unfortunately, we did not detect any change in the position of delegations with regard to the programme of work. We still hear divergent opinions about its possible content. A majority of the delegations support the A-5 proposal. At the same

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time, some other delegations are not in a position to support it. Different delegations have different priorities as to the work of the Conference. The positions of member States differ to the extent of not allowing consensus on the programme nor on the establishment of any ad hoc committees or the appointment of any Special Coordinator. However, we note that there is emphasis on the need for more flexibility, and the idea of updating the issues the CD should deal with is also present.

During my consultations, I noted concerns or uneasiness with regard to the CD's work and future. There is an overall expectation to overcome the unsatisfactory performance the CD has given for the last nine years, an expectation to generate creativity, to come up with new ideas, to start exhaustive discussions on merit and deliberations leading to effective and fruitful work. This adds to what we could call "receiving a strong message", especially after last year's First Committee meeting. Many delegations underline that this year we should use "momentum" and create the conditions for deliberations on substance that could lead us to adopting the long-awaited programme of work.

Let me now inform you about the initiative of the six CD Presidents for the 2006 session, that is, the appointment of the Friends of Presidents.

The appointment of the Friends of Presidents is the prerogative of the Presidents, who can freely choose who could assist them in fulfilling their tasks, and is based on precedent in this Conference. The use of the mechanism of "Friends of the Chair" is nothing new in this room. Maybe the only novelty is that the group of "Friends" has the support of all six CD Presidents in 2006, which should allow coherence and continuity in their functioning.

It is my pleasure to announce that the six CD Presidents for the 2006 session - Poland, the Republic of Korea, Romania, Russia, Senegal and Slovakia - have appointed the following Ambassadors as the Friends of Presidents: the Ambassador of Sri Lanka, H.E. Mrs. Sarala Fernando; the Ambassador of Algeria, H.E. Mr. Idriss Jazairy; the Ambassador of Bulgaria, H.E. Mr. Petko Draganov; the Ambassador of Chile, H.E. Mr. Juan Martabit; the Ambassador of Italy, H.E. Mr. Carlo Trezza; and the Ambassador of Japan, H.E. Mr. Yoshiki Mine.

FoPs will conduct their activities during the whole of the 2006 session of the CD. Their main task will be to assist the P6 in discharging their responsibilities. It is our conviction that the Presidents should focus on activities directly aimed at searching for consensus on a programme of work, namely, on the proper planning and preparation of structured debates and on other activities related to the programme of work. Therefore, the FoPs could concentrate on two topics.

First, the agenda. Preserving the agenda is crucially important, taking into account the lack of a programme of work. The CD may deal with any issues, and they could be dealt with within its agenda. At the same time, every CD President is obliged to continue to keep in mind the question of the review of the agenda, as indicated in the *chapeau* of the agenda adopted on 24 January. We are of the view that the Friends of Presidents could assist the P6 in discharging

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that responsibility, and conduct informal consultations in this regard. It is also worth mentioning here that, according to the rules of procedure, a programme of work should be adopted on the basis of the CD agenda. Therefore, there is a clear link between the issue of the agenda and the programme of work. Thus, the FoPs, subsequently and naturally, will also assist the P6 in our search for consensus on a programme of work.

The second topic is the effectiveness of methods of work. In 2005, many delegations raised the question of the improvement of the effectiveness of the methods of work of the CD. Although the key problems of the CD are of a political nature, there are views that the improvement of procedures could lead to the creation of a more favourable organizational environment to affect change in political postures. Let me give you some examples of ideas raised in 2005: the extension of the duration of the term of Presidents (as four weeks lead to fragmentation and lack of continuity) and the range of Presidential prerogatives with respect to the appointment of the Special Coordinators.

At the beginning, the FoPs would have no particular mandate, except the above outline. However, the mandate for the FoPs' activities could be changed by the P6, if necessary, in the course of CD proceedings.

Allow me now to inform you about the way the Friends of Presidents are going to function. Each Friend will conduct consultations in his own capacity. When necessary, there will be meetings of the FoPs or of the FoPs with the P6. The FoPs would analyse the existing proposals, study suggestions made during the 2006 session, if any are put forward, and present their opinions to the current CD President.

The Friends will report to the current President on their findings. When necessary, each current President should foresee an opportunity to present the findings of the Friends of Presidents in plenary meetings (most probably informal), allowing the CD to discuss them. The current President would act as an informal focal point for the FoPs.

Today we are going to hold a debate, based on agenda items, which I hope will help us identify issues or possible elements of the work of the CD. As has been stated many times in this chamber, this agenda, as adopted by the CD, is flexible enough to allow us to deal with any issues. They could be dealt with within its scope. And its scope already contains the so-called four core issues, as well as creating opportunities to come up with different ideas through constructive and creative deliberations, thus allowing the identification of possible elements of work. This is why we should concentrate on our discussion based on the agenda items. The identification of the possible elements of work would not only fill the agenda with substance but, perhaps, could also allow us to better use and allocate our time as well as the assets at the CD's disposal.

Let me assure you that the P6 will spare no efforts to work out the details of the "timetable of the CD Presidents' activities". It is our intention to inform you about it next Thursday, 9 February.

(The President)

Let me underline strongly that both the identification of the issues - potential elements of a programme of work - and the supposed "timetable" are without prejudice to any future decisions of this Conference on a programme of work or the establishment of any subsidiary body. At the same time, reaching consensus on a programme of work remains the most important goal for me and the other CD Presidents in the 2006 session.

Distinguished delegates, you made the swift adoption of this year's CD agenda possible. I hope that today we are taking a second small step towards the revitalization and better functioning of the CD. I sincerely hope that you will not hesitate to contact our Friends of Presidents and provide them with your views on any or all of the above-mentioned subjects.

I would now like to give the floor to the representative of India, Ambassador Jayant Prasad.

Mr. PRASAD (India): Mr. President, my delegation would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and commend your many initiatives in seeking consensus on its programme of work. I wish you success in this mission and assure you of the fullest cooperation of my delegation.

We appreciate also your initiative to extend the established convention of the Presidential troika to include all the incoming Presidents for the 2006 CD session. Your idea to involve them in decision-making and to invite them to the Presidential consultations will ensure continuity and consistency in Presidential initiatives all through the year. The five incoming Presidents also deserve credit for working closely with you in creatively exploring options for commencing substantive work in the Conference.

We are satisfied that the Conference adopted its traditional agenda, by consensus, at its very first meeting. This only reflects the belief of member States that the existing agenda of the Conference is relevant, inclusive and flexible enough for dealing with issues that they regard as important for their national security, as well as international peace and security.

Having adopted the agenda, the primary task now before the Conference is to reach agreement on a programme of work. India is willing to consider any initiative that could facilitate consensus on it. Forty-two successive presidencies, since 1999, have grappled with this challenge. We support your initiative to invite member States to engage in a debate on the issues of the agenda of the Conference in the hope that our deliberations today, and in the coming days, will enable us to find common ground to reach agreement.

The goal of nuclear disarmament has been on the international agenda ever since the first nuclear weapons were built and used. The international community has accorded the highest priority to this objective, as embodied in the 1978 Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. The goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world remains as important today as it was then. Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, addressing the Indian Parliament in July last year, stressed that nuclear disarmament remains a core concern of

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India's foreign policy. India is committed to a nuclear-weapon-free world, to be realized in a systemic and progressive manner, through global, verifiable and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament.

As an interim measure, until the achievement of the objective of universal nuclear disarmament, India continues to support the demand of the non-nuclear-weapon States for multilateral and legally binding security assurances. They have regarded the existing security assurances as conditional and not as legally binding. There has been, however, little progress in realizing this demand.

India has always expressed its readiness to participate in the negotiations in the CD on a multilateral, non-discriminatory and internationally and effectively verifiable fissile material cut-off treaty. This is the essence of the Shannon mandate, which embodied the spirit of the 1993 General Assembly resolution on FMCT, co-sponsored by India and many other Member States. While conscious of the developments in this regard over the past year and a half, we continue to believe that this essence should remain the basis for any future work.

The peaceful application of space technology has very much contributed to India's social and economic development. India has created a growing infrastructure, including the deployment of several satellites in space for communications and remote sensing and for the utilization of space technology and assets in space for such diverse sectors as agriculture, health, education, natural resource management and disaster management. India is, therefore, committed to the peaceful pursuit of space technology and to preserving outer space, a common heritage of mankind, exclusively for peaceful uses. We share the concerns about the dangers of the deployment of weapons in outer space and believe that this will not be in our collective interest. We regard this Conference as the appropriate forum to deal with the issue.

The agenda of the Conference is comprehensive and enjoys the support of all member States. Likewise, for any programme of work of the Conference to enjoy the support of all member States, it will have to take into account their concerns and priorities. India has also, for instance, sought to accommodate the growing convergence on the A-5 proposal, even though its mandate departed from CD/1570, which proposed a negotiating mandate for nuclear disarmament. Though not fully satisfied with the A-5 proposal, India has decided to support it in the hope that it could become the basis for the CD's programme of work. India continues to support the proposal as it reflects, to a large extent, the priorities of most constituents of the Conference. In this context, India continues to fully subscribe to the statement made by the G21 last year.

The United Nations Secretary-General has acknowledged, in his message to the Conference, that it is the lack of political will which has not allowed the Conference to reach consensus on a programme of work. As we have seen, procedural fixes and cosmetic changes in the existing proposals have failed to end the impasse. The underlying reasons behind the Conference's deadlock have also impacted on other multilateral processes and forums, such as in the outcome document of the 2005 World Summit. This symptomatizes not just a procedural

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failure; it reflects the deep divergences in the security concerns, priorities and goals of member States. It is, therefore, not surprising that we have not been successful in reaching consensus on this Conference's programme of work.

We do not share the view that the current impasse signifies the failure of the Conference. As the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body, the Conference has continuing relevance in today's world. There is no alternative forum that brings together militarily significant States and that can engage in negotiations on issues that directly impact on international security. If there is a divergence of views on security concerns, the same absence of convergence among key States will also impede progress in any alternative process or mechanism.

India believes that we need to remain engaged in deliberations, since these are an essential prerequisite for the success of any negotiating process. Your pragmatic proposal, Sir, to undertake an exploration of agenda issues may be an instrument of distillation, leading to the enlargement of the common ground. As Mahatma Gandhi said: "No principle exists without its application." We must persevere in our efforts, but these should expressly be made for the purpose of establishing a programme of work. We are supporting the Presidential initiative in the hope that discussions in the plenary meetings may lead to the commencement of substantive work in the Conference.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Prasad of India for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Indonesia, Ambassador Markarim Wibisono.

Mr. WIBISONO (Indonesia): Mr President, it is certainly a privilege as well as an honour for me to speak for the first time on an occasion that sees the coincidental meeting, under your presidency, of this special forum in this historic chamber. Therefore, permit me first to congratulate you on your assumption of this high office on this auspicious occasion and also to express my firm conviction that, under your able leadership, we shall put fresh resolve into achieving more productive and constructive deliberations. At the same time, you can rest assured that my delegation will render its full support and cooperation to our common endeavours towards a more secure world.

It is indeed a great concern for many of us, including Indonesia, that the Conference on Disarmament has been dormant for almost a decade, even if we recognize that the post-cold-war era is supposed to have created a conducive atmosphere for international peace and security. I believe that the members of this "best club in town" will concur that arms control and disarmament remain one of the most important, relevant and pressing issues in the world today. On this basis, I am personally afraid that if the current tendency prevails, the CD will no longer be able to claim to be the sole negotiating forum and will become just another deliberating forum or, even worse, will soon be considered as no more than a talk show.

However, at the beginning of the 2006 session we have witnessed somewhat more encouraging developments. The decision taken by you as the current President, and by the five incoming Presidents, to establish a P6 mechanism is surely a "breakthrough". At least this

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ensures that throughout the 2006 session, the attention and deliberations of the members of the CD will be more focused. My delegation therefore wishes to congratulate the P6 and to express our great appreciation for this creative and unprecedented innovation. It is our common hope that this “good sign” will be followed by further concrete initiatives and practical steps towards breaking the current deadlock in the programme of work.

Some years ago, in this forum, my predecessor stated that, despite our preference for a comprehensive and balanced programme of work, and hence our association with the G21 position, Indonesia is flexible in its approach and open to new initiatives. This approach is based on the conviction that flexibility is needed if we wish to see the CD back on track and reclaiming its credibility. Today, Indonesia remains firmly of this conviction. However, flexibility and also openness will only succeed in addressing the challenges before us and in answering the expectations of the international community if they are guided by certain basic principles.

First, my delegation observes that the only cause of the current deadlock in the CD is the lack of political will of its members. No country in this chamber, I believe, is against the ultimate goal of achieving general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. Yet, for years, this Conference has been held hostage by some who believe that the only way forward is through the use of the rule of consensus. If we are serious about making progress in our substantive work, political will is a must and, to have such will, there should be flexibility and openness. Otherwise, I am afraid that at this very early stage of the session, the outcome of the 2006 Conference on Disarmament can already be predicted.

Second, we are all aware that the presence of weapons of mass destruction poses a serious threat and a great danger not only to countries that own or produce them, but to all countries, to all human beings. Addressing such a problem certainly does not belong to a handful of countries; instead, a multilateral approach should be the best way to proceed. A unilateral approach in this regard is certainly welcome and also appreciated, but it will only solve the problem partially and incomprehensively. Therefore, multilateralism in arms control and disarmament should be widely accepted and respected as the key principle in our work, since it represents the relevance and importance of the international forum, including the Conference on Disarmament.

Third, arms control and disarmament is certainly a very broad and complex issue as it embraces a wide range of aspects - political, economic, humanitarian, environmental and more. Meanwhile, every type of weapon of mass destruction also has its complicated ramifications, making our efforts to abolish them more difficult. It is in this regard that my delegation wishes to stress the ultimate importance of pragmatism if we really wish to see the Conference on Disarmament make real progress. Indonesia remains committed to the final objective of a world free of weapons of mass destruction and to a treaty of general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. However, Indonesia is also pragmatic on the ways and means to achieve these objectives and, in this context, is more than ready to have a step-by-step approach. Ideally, we would prefer to see the CD address all the items on the agenda simultaneously; but we are also ready to start discussing some of them as suggested in the

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A-5 proposal, for example. The proposal which has been widely acclaimed as the most viable in years is on the table. My delegation is ready, if it is the wish of the Conference, to start discussing it and get the ball rolling.

This Conference needs to be revitalized, and for that purpose we need political will in order to restart our discussions; we need to underscore the role of multilateralism in this endeavour and we need to be pragmatic in our approach. The P6 has started its work with the fresh idea of a unified presidency. It is our hope that this initiative will be followed up by sustained and constructive discussions and deliberations.

Finally, the Ambassador of the Netherlands reminded us a few days ago of the noble meaning of the painting in this chamber. I therefore, in turn, remind everyone here that prior to entering this room, on the wall in the hallway, we can read these words by Robert Cecil: "Here is a great work for peace in which all can participate. The nations must disarm or perish. Be just, and fear not." It is my conviction that together we can do this great work.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Wibisono of Indonesia for his statement and his kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of the Russian Federation, Mr. Valery Loshchinin.

Mr. LOSHCHININ (Russian Federation) (translated from Russian): First of all, Mr. President, I would like to stress that we support all of your constructive ideas which are aimed at resumption of the practical work of the Conference.

The subject matter of our deliberations today is how, on the basis of the adopted agenda, to proceed to the adoption of the Conference's programme of work, which is the next step provided for by the rules of procedure. We are open-minded on this issue. We would be prepared not to object to the "five Ambassadors' proposal" and hope that consensus will be reached on the basis of those proposals. It is that proposal which, as we all know, now enjoys the widest support.

The Russian Federation's well-known priority is the issue of the prevention of an arms race in outer space by means of a legally binding ban on the placement of weapons there and the use of force against outer space objects. This is a point we have made repeatedly. This is perhaps the most relevant and most promising item on the Conference's agenda. After all, there are no weapons in outer space yet, and prevention is always easier than prohibition and reduction. What is more, this involves the further development of international outer space law, whose foundations have already been laid, and the closing of the existing significant lacunae in that law. Also important is the fact that cooperation in space between the major players - Russia, the United States of America, China, India, the European Union and other countries - is developing rapidly, which is creating favourable political prerequisites for negotiations. It is in the interests of all States without exception, even those which do not yet have their own outer space programmes, to ensure that spacecraft operate normally: mankind as a whole is increasingly dependent on outer space activities. It is also in the interests of all for there to be no military threats in and from outer space. It is also clear that, with the rapid development of

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outer-space-related military and information technologies, no voluntary cooperation between individual States, important though it may be, can guarantee the equal security for all that can be provided only by a universal legally binding agreement.

Our objective is to draw up and conclude in the Conference a new legally binding agreement on the non-deployment of weapons in outer space and prevention of the threat or use of force against outer space objects. Nevertheless, as you are aware, we have taken a more important and difficult step towards compromise in the context of the “five Ambassadors’ proposal”. In the context of the “five Ambassadors’ proposal” we have agreed to an exploratory mandate rather than a negotiating mandate for the future ad hoc committee on PAROS. We are expecting gestures in return from our partners.

The Russian Federation is committed to the goal of nuclear disarmament in compliance with article VI of the NPT. In this regard, the complete elimination of nuclear arms can be achieved only through gradual phased movement towards the ultimate objective on the basis of a comprehensive approach with participation by all nuclear Powers and, of course, while maintaining strategic stability. We share the opinion of the distinguished Ambassador of China on the importance of the principle of equal security for all States, as well as on the fact that it is impossible to strengthen one’s own security at the expense of another’s security. Russia is living up to all its commitments with respect to the reduction of nuclear weapons. The process of these reductions, which is a highly labour-intensive, technically difficult and costly task, is on the whole moving ahead successfully, consistently and continuously. Owing to the joint and concerted efforts being made by Russia and the United States, there are ever fewer nuclear weapons left on earth.

We do not object to the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament with the mandate provided for by the “five Ambassadors’ proposal”. I would like to draw your attention to the fact that, as compared with 1991, Russia’s total nuclear arsenal has been reduced fivefold. Its arsenal of non-strategic nuclear weapons has been reduced by three quarters. Under the Moscow Treaty, by the end of 2012 Russia and the United States must further reduce the levels of their strategic warheads approximately threefold as compared with the final ceilings established for the end of 2001. Russia has repeatedly stated that it is ready to continue reducing its strategic potential to an even lower level than that envisaged by the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty.

In our view, the work of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament would be incomplete and one-sided if it were to focus strictly on nuclear arms reductions in the nuclear States. The issue of nuclear non-proliferation and of strengthening the NPT regime is currently becoming more acute and urgent. This is also an issue that should be discussed in the ad hoc committee. At the same time, the interrelated issues of nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and cooperation in the peaceful uses of atomic energy are being thoroughly and comprehensively studied within the NPT review process. It would certainly be worth thinking about how to avoid duplication in the spheres of work of the two forums.

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Russia has consistently supported the agreed recommendations of the 1995 and 2000 NPT review conferences concerning the drafting of a treaty to ban the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other explosive devices in the Conference on Disarmament. Achieving a compromise on a balanced programme of work for the Conference would make it possible to launch negotiations on this important issue.

And there is one more “nuclear” issue on our agenda. We would not object to the proposal drawn up by the “five Ambassadors” for the establishment of an ad hoc committee in the Conference on the issue of security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Russia would be ready to move towards the development of a global agreement on negative security assurances. At the same time we would like to note that nearly 100 States which are members of nuclear-weapon-free zones have already been provided with legally binding security assurances. We support efforts to establish new zones of this type.

These are our approaches to the core items of the agenda on which most of the discussions are now under way. In our statement we keep referring to the proposal made by the group of “five Ambassadors”. This attests to the fact that Russia is close to supporting those views. We would be prepared to agree to the appointment of special coordinators on the three remaining issues of substance - new types of WMD and new systems of such weapons, a comprehensive programme of disarmament, and transparency in armaments. We have expressed our views on this subject on more than one occasion. We do not think that serious disagreements can arise here. In our view, these items have been formulated in such a general form that they should allow us to consider practically any specific issue within the framework of an agreed programme of work.

Concerning the other issues related to maintaining international peace and security, they obviously should meet at least three criteria if they are to be included in our programme of work: they should enjoy consensus; they should correspond to the Conference’s mandate and profile; and work on them should not duplicate what other international organizations or forums are already doing or are planning to do. We note that no such issues have yet been identified. Of course, we do not object to continuing to seek such issues; there is no doubt that the Conference on Disarmament must respond to new threats and challenges. However, we now face a task of a higher order - the resumption of normal work in the Conference. It is clear to all that an idle Conference cannot and will not be able to consider any issues, whether new or traditional. We are close to the thinking expressed by the distinguished Ambassador of Sweden when he said that the present debate about old threats versus new threats is a false debate, and the result has been that neither is dealt with, and this is very unfortunate. Therefore, in our view, while fully respecting the right of any State to propose any issue for consideration, we believe that at this stage it is important not to further complicate the already difficult search for a compromise on the programme of work of the Conference by introducing additional issues, however topical they may be. Meanwhile, of course, we remain open to any new ideas and proposals without prejudice to reaching an agreement on the programme of work.

In conclusion I would like to say a few words on a methodological issue. Russia welcomes all efforts to seek a compromise on a balanced programme of work for the

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Conference. Only such a programme can reconcile diverging interests and priorities within a multilateral forum operating on the basis of the rule of consensus. Demands that we renounce a balanced approach ignore reality and move us farther from it. They give rise to additional difficulties instead of facilitating progress towards compromise. The way out is to be found elsewhere: under present conditions progress can be ensured only by moving towards each other, taking into account each other's interests and concerns and showing political goodwill. It is this approach that the Russian delegation supports, and it is our belief that with the political will of all States we could reach consensus on the Conference's programme of work on the basis of the "five Ambassadors' proposal", which I would remind you is an evolving proposal.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Loshchinin of the Russian Federation for his statement, and I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Sri Lanka, Ms. Sarala Fernando.

Ms. FERNANDO (Sri Lanka): Mr. President, since this is my first intervention under your presidency, let me take this opportunity to extend our sincere congratulations on your assumption of this important responsibility. We also join other delegations to request you to convey our sincere condolences on behalf of Sri Lanka to the families of those who lost their lives in the tragic accident in Katowice.

Your presidency offers a unique opportunity, since your country Poland has experience and understanding of aspirations and sensitivities across the regional groups. Moreover, the Polish presidency comes at a crucial time. As you mentioned in your opening statement, our current situation is one of serious frustration and quests for alternative approaches to get the CD back to work. We must also be mindful of the management reforms currently being processed in New York, which will bring new pressures to further reduce the resources allocated to the CD for reasons of the impasse in this body. During this year, considering what is at stake, all of us in the CD bear a special responsibility to engage each other and our capitals, using all the creativity, flexibility and political will evoked by many delegations, to assure the healthy continuity of this unique body.

Some delegations have referred to the magnificent murals of José María Sert in this Council chamber and the power they hold to inspire our work. We would however prefer to recall, as did many speakers during this week's 1,000th plenary meeting, the historic achievements of the CD, the landmark multilateral disarmament agreements which represent today a robust body of international law, as the basis to inspire our efforts to get the CD back to work.

Many delegations have referred in the First Committee and in the CD to their disappointment and concern at the lack of progress in disarmament matters throughout 2005, notably the failure of the NPT Review Conference, the impasse in the CD and UNDC, as well as the inability to agree on any language on disarmament in the World Summit outcome document. Nevertheless, the announcement of the award of the Nobel Prize to Director General ElBaradei and IAEA on the eve of the First Committee, as well as the very positive statements delivered by the heads of OPCW and CTBTO during that session, could be considered as healthy signs that

(Ms. Fernando, Sri Lanka)

multilateral arms control and disarmament initiatives, some born in the CD, are now well into the stage of implementation with the broad support of member States. The statement presented by the Russian Ambassador also presented important joint efforts for the reduction of nuclear weapons. Reports presented at the First Committee and by delegations in the CD on the physical destruction of important stocks of arms and landmines have a similar positive effect.

Several delegations have already commended you, Mr. President, for getting the agenda of the CD adopted so quickly this year. Sri Lanka continues to hold that the agenda is relevant, comprehensive and flexible enough to accommodate all issues of concern. You have also taken an initiative to seek the joint cooperation of all CD Presidents of the 2006 session, as well as to institute a mechanism of Friends of Presidents with due geographical balance. With the passage of time, the hibernation in the CD has seen its pool of expertise depleted, and suspicion and cynicism set in. In this impasse, Presidential prerogatives have become something of a last resort. However, your “inclusive” approach and willingness to engage across regional groups will assist in gathering momentum for the work ahead, to ensure continuity and a determined attempt to shape the CD proceedings this year while at the same time building confidence towards an eventual resumption of work. I can assure you of my delegation’s full support to you and the 2006 Presidents in this endeavour.

You have also announced your intention to organize structured debate on issues and to establish a timetable. My delegation is on record as stating that Sri Lanka fully supports the five Ambassadors’ proposal. We could also consider any other proposal that would be likely to meet consensus. To this end, we are also of the view that the wider and more frequent use of informal and open-ended consultations could take place on specific issues. These informal consultations would provide a flexible method of dealing with issues in a substantive manner pending agreement on the establishment of any subsidiary body to commence negotiations.

We cannot turn a deaf ear to the call for reform throughout the United Nations system. Many of us have had the opportunity to witness at first hand the recent developments - though small - towards improving the methods of work of the First Committee. Should there not be coherence in our work across the multilateral forums? Finding a balance by moving flexibly between the segments for formal statements and interactive debate, while opening the way also to the participation of civil society, are some of the small steps achieved in the First Committee which could benefit the CD too. Let us not forget that the CD rules of procedure already permit invitations to be extended to the specialized agencies, IAEA or any other organs of the United Nations system, to assist in advancing the work of the Conference.

There are too few of us who have personal recollections of what the CD has been capable of until the Ambassador of Sweden reminded us recently of the excitement of the negotiation process. So I ask you, dear colleagues, since winter has come, can spring be far behind?

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Fernando of Sri Lanka for her statement and the words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of France, Ambassador François Rivasseau.

Mr. RIVASSEAU (France) (translated from French): Mr. President, allow the French delegation to associate itself with the condolences expressed to Poland here following the disaster in Katowice.

Sir, you requested delegations to suggest to you avenues of work and reflection on issues which could be taken up by the Conference on Disarmament this year. We believe that the Conference on Disarmament must be in a position to address all important issues in the area it covers today. In that spirit, for over a year now France and Switzerland have been thinking together about critical civil infrastructure. We informally circulated a draft mandate last year. A French expert came to put our views on the subject at an informal plenary meeting which was held on 10 June 2004. On 28 and 29 October 2003 and 7 and 8 October 2004, thanks to the boost provided by the Swiss authorities, the Geneva Centre for Security Policy organized two forums at which this issue was extensively discussed. These events resulted in publications which have been communicated to the members of the Conference. Yesterday, in a spirit of reflection, we organized open-ended consultations on this issue. Lastly, with a view to seeking consensus and enriching our thinking in this forum, our two countries are submitting to the Conference a draft mandate which is being distributed today so that the issue of critical civil infrastructure may be taken into account in the Chair's efforts to secure agreement on a programme of work in this forum. And I have the honour, Sir, to ask you to give it a reference number as usual for the working papers of the Conference.

In the spirit of flexibility and consensus which governed the adoption of the agenda this year, we could, if you wish, consider placing this issue under item 5 of our agenda, even though, nationally speaking, our reservations concerning this agenda remain relevant.

While thanking you for distributing this draft mandate as an official document of the Conference, we will also be sending you a letter today to confirm in writing what I have just said, and if I may conclude, Sir, I would say that last week the Ambassador of the Netherlands was hoping that the curtains would be opened, and I must say I remember that two years ago, during the statement I made when I arrived, I expressed exactly the same wish. The curtains are open today, Sir, and I hope that bodes well for our future work.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Rivasseau of France for his statement, and I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Switzerland, Mr. Jürg Streuli.

Mr. STREULI (Switzerland) (translated from French): I also noted that the curtains are open, but there is fog outside. I hope that is not symbolic.

Switzerland together with France forms part of the project for a mandate on critical civil infrastructure. Yesterday, our open-ended consultations on this draft showed once again that threats to critical civil infrastructure are real. The legitimate questions raised during the discussion showed that we are in the early stages of analysing the threat and the way in which we could address it. In our view, the time is ripe to begin work along the lines set out in our joint proposal. Coordination with existing efforts in other regional organizations, definitions, implementation of recommendations and any other solution required could be handled by the

(Mr. Streuli, Switzerland)

group of governmental experts we propose setting up. We invite all the delegations in the CD to contribute substantially to elaborating on our draft. My delegation therefore suggests that the issue of critical civil infrastructure should be considered under the agenda of our Conference. It should be included in your planning for the structured debate during 2006.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Streuli of Switzerland for his statement, and I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Italy, Mr. Carlo Trezza.

Mr. TREZZA (Italy): Mr. President, at the outset I would like to thank you and the other five Presidents of the CD this year for appointing me as a Friend of the Presidents. I wish to assure you that I shall perform these duties to the best of my capabilities and on the basis of the guidelines that you have outlined today.

In your inaugural statement of 24 January, you indicated that you would have held a debate based on the CD agenda to identify issues which might constitute possible elements for our future work. Although our views were presented to you in bilateral consultations, we understand that during this session delegations are expected to present individually or on a collective basis the priority issues for our work this year. Of course, I am taking the floor on a national basis and not as a Friend of the Presidents.

Our views are based on previous national positions as well as on European Union positions, and in particular, on the European Union strategies and common positions on non-proliferation and disarmament, which were submitted as official documents of the CD. Let me add that the so-called "food for thought" non-paper, presented by the then President of the CD one year ago, and which is a further elaboration of the A-5 proposal, remains an important term of reference for us.

The general issue of nuclear fissile material is today a topic which requires the greatest attention. In this regard, we are analysing with interest the statement made by the distinguished Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation on nuclear fissile material on 31 January.

We have already explained in the past the reasons why the negotiation at the CD of a multilateral treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (FMCT) constitutes the priority for my country. We support the establishment of an ad hoc committee to that end. We believe that the negotiation of such a treaty commands the widest support in the CD.

We recognize that other delegations have indicated, even today, other priorities, and in particular the prevention of an arms race in outer space, negative security assurances, nuclear disarmament issues. We are ready to deal with them in our programme of work and in our timetable.

Italy also believes that more consideration can be given within the Conference on Disarmament to appropriate new and additional issues relevant to this forum.

(Mr. Trezza, Italy)

Finally, and at this particular juncture, Italy calls upon the 2006 presidencies of the CD to establish a timetable for this year based on the priorities expressed by delegations and to seek a compromise on a substantial programme of work.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Trezza of Italy for his statement, and I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Romania, Mr. Doru Costea.

Mr. COSTEA (Romania): Mr. President, as requested by the unwritten rules of procedure of the Conference, allow me at the outset to congratulate you not only on assuming the high and highly demanding office of President of the CD, but first and foremost for the dedication you attach in accomplishing this task. Let me also put on record my personal support, as well as my delegation's support, for all your efforts.

If asked to define the atmosphere in the Conference on Disarmament in one single word, the first and most pregnant that comes to my mind would be "frustration". We could sense it among the delegations for the last couple of years. We can feel it more strongly at the beginning of the session. We have heard it uttered this very day. It may be defined as a common feature of the statements we heard during the first plenary meetings. Frustration is also felt personally, perhaps stronger, by those approaching the podium and stepping up there.

Please allow me to quote a short fragment from a statement delivered by the Romanian President of the Conference on Disarmament at the beginning of his term at the 756th plenary meeting on 20 February 1997. If necessary, then I could explain my frustration.

"It is a great honour for me to assume the presidency of the Conference on behalf of Romania. At the same time, I take this as a particular responsibility. ... the Conference on Disarmament is called to embark upon a process of self-examination and adaptation to a changed political environment. Well before the conclusion of the negotiations on the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty last year we all started to consider the future of the Conference on Disarmament, its new priorities, how it could best serve the legitimate aspirations of mankind. Appropriate responses and concrete actions are expected from us without undue delay. Indeed, in setting its objectives and working methods, in its very spirit, the Conference must reflect current international trends. Its negotiating role must be preserved and reinforced. Concrete results must crown our work if the Conference is to remain faithful to its generous goals. I shall spare no effort to serve the interests of the Conference to the best of my ability, in a balanced, open and pragmatic way."

Well, my single comment would be that nine years after this statement, there is nothing more to add to it. In my opening statement, in less than two months from now, the best I can do is only change some words, and try harder to make a difference. Fortunately, on your initiative, this year we have decided that the six Presidents of the 2006 CD session should coordinate and cooperate better in order at least to edge the Conference to its main aims and purposes.

(Mr. Costea, Romania)

When we started this exercise, all six of us professed realistic but optimistic expectations about the chances and the ways of launching substantive work in the CD. Therefore, none of us expected you today to announce that the miracle has happened and we have agreed on a programme of work. What I personally would have expected is that after the already well-known assertion that “there is no consensus on a programme of work”, you would have been able to present concrete proposals that delegations might have come up with. It would have been a sign that each and every delegation in this Council chamber has understood that only together, the 65 of us - not only the P6 - can remove, or at least move a little bit, the huge stone blocking our activity. Yet we hope that it can still happen. But to do this, we all may wish to keep in mind at least three basic principles. First, Presidents try to provide opportunities for members to come forth with updated and debate-provoking contributions. Second, any delegation may raise any topic any time, as long as it is strictly linked to the mandate of the Conference. Third, national priorities are not - and let me repeat: not - mutually exclusive.

Several delegations have asked to make room for creativity in our work. My understanding is that such a call is not restricted to the Presidents of the CD, but to its entire membership. For the last few years the Presidents of the Conference have done their best. I think it is high time for all the members, including the Presidents, to continue doing so.

I would like to end this statement today by voicing a question that somehow haunts me about the significance of the magic word which is “consensus” in the CD, and perhaps we may give it a thought. Does consensus in the CD mean “no vote” or “vote no”?

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Costea of Romania, an incoming President. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Japan, Mr. Yoshiki Mine.

Mr. MINE (Japan): Mr. President, I would like once again to express my appreciation to you and this year’s successive Presidents for the initiative to have structured debate throughout the year. I would like to assure you of the full support and cooperation of my delegation.

A few minutes ago you made some introductory remarks about the Friends of the Presidents. Let me express my gratitude and sense of honour at being appointed one of the Friends of the Presidents.

On this occasion of identifying the matters of importance in our new session, I would like to express our views on the priorities of the CD. Japan has placed its greatest importance on the FMCT as a measure for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The FMCT will be an essential building block for the total elimination of nuclear arsenals. Furthermore, it will contribute to the prevention of nuclear proliferation by globally banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, as well as enhancing transparency and accountability through its verification or safeguards system. The immediate commencement of negotiations on the FMCT and its early conclusion was already agreed to in the 1995 and 2000 Review Conferences. Furthermore, the FMCT is the only issue among the four core issues that has gained support from all CD members. Therefore, it is ripe for negotiation. Today I will not go into detail on the substance of the FMCT, but I will just express our views on the priorities of the CD.

(Mr. Mine, Japan)

We intend to issue a working paper for the upcoming session on FMCT, and we are looking forward to a useful exchange of views with members to deepen the substance on the FMCT. To repeat what we have already discussed is not good enough. We need to go further. Last week I stressed the importance of setting a clear-cut timetable specifying how and when each issue is treated, so that we can prepare well in advance and make a meaningful exchange of views possible. We strongly urge that the timetable includes continuous sessions with sufficient time devoted to the FMCT. Continuous sessions devoted to one issue are necessary for deepening the substance without interruption. Moreover, this will make it easier for members to bring their experts from capitals.

A timetable where issues change every week is undesirable. In our eyes, the FMCT is a priority, but of course we are certainly open to discuss any issue just as long as it fits in well with the functioning of the CD and promotes the development of an agreeable future programme of work.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Mine of Japan for his statement, and I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Australia, Mr. Mike Smith.

Mr. SMITH (Australia): Mr. President, as this is the first time that Australia has taken the floor during your presidency, may I welcome the enthusiasm and initiative you have brought to your office? I can assure you of my delegation's full support for your efforts to reinvigorate this body.

In nine years, this Conference has failed to achieve much of substance. For my delegation, this state of affairs is a particular frustration and a disappointment.

We have been one of the vast majority of delegations that have shown flexibility in supporting the various proposals for a programme of work put forward during that period.

It is a great regret that the CD has not begun the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty. This negotiation is long overdue.

States have a good understanding of the key issues after years of examination. An FMCT would make a vital contribution to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Australia believes a most effective FMCT would include appropriate measures to verify parties' compliance with their obligations.

But the priority should be to start FMCT negotiations. Detailed aspects of the treaty, including the nature of any verification regime, should be left to that negotiation.

For this reason, Australia supports the calls for the commencement of FMCT negotiations, without delay and preconditions.

But should the CD yet again fall short of this goal, we would support continued efforts to prepare for the negotiation of an FMCT at the earliest possible time.

(Mr. Smith, Australia)

In the nine years we have failed to agree a programme of work, other threats to international security have gathered strength.

Of particular concern is the proliferation of man-portable air defence systems.

MANPADS are a legitimate weapon for States to possess in meeting their defence needs. But their transfer to and use by non-State actors threatens international peace and security.

Experience shows that non-State actors can obtain these weapons easily and cheaply.

And they have been used against some 40 civilian aircraft, leading to some 600 deaths since the mid-1970s, according to some estimates.

The international community has taken steps to address this threat.

Australia, for example, has launched an initiative to encourage Asia-Pacific and other States to implement effective controls over the manufacture, storage and transfer of MANPADS.

As we struggle to find consensus on a programme of work in the CD, an international consensus on the need to prevent the illicit transfer of MANPADS already exists.

Just last year, the United Nations General Assembly adopted by consensus resolution 60/77 on prevention of the illicit transfer and unauthorized access to and use of man-portable air defence systems.

In Australia's view, this consensus provides an opportunity for the CD to examine the threat posed by the proliferation of MANPADS and develop measures to combat this.

In proposing MANPADS as an issue for the 2006 session of the CD, Australia does not intend to divert efforts to achieve agreement on a programme of work.

But we also believe that the nine-year-long inability of this Conference to find consensus on four issues should not prevent us from examining and even negotiating other pressing arms control and disarmament issues - all the more so where a consensus on the need for action exists.

It is our hope that by including MANPADS during its 2006 session, the CD will identify and develop measures to prevent the proliferation of MANPADS to non-State actors through their illicit manufacture, transfer and use.

To this end, I have written to you, Mr. President, outlining our proposal, and ask that my letter be distributed as an official document of the Conference.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Smith of Australia for his statement and I give the floor to the Ambassador of Turkey, Mr. Türkeul Kurttekin.

Mr. KURTTEKIN (Turkey): Mr. President, allow me to begin by saying how greatly we appreciate the CD's efforts you have launched, together with other members of the P6, to get the CD back to substantial work. As we said during the first plenary session of the year, we are encouraged by the speed with which the agenda for this year was adopted. We hope that this is a good omen for the year ahead.

It is high time for the CD, the sole negotiating body for disarmament affairs, to dust itself off and once again become relevant. It is true that 2005 was a disappointment in terms of disarmament. Yet this should not be any reason to put us off. On the contrary, it should give us all the more reason to get our act together and prove to the world that all hope is not lost. We do not have the luxury of remaining idle in the Conference on Disarmament any longer. At a time when there are talks and even a report on *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility*, we cannot ignore the fact that the Conference on Disarmament is exactly the platform to work towards achieving such a goal. Particularly when we are faced with the various new challenges, as you, Mr. President and many delegations have already referred to, we cannot fail in combining effort to search for greater security for us all.

The Secretary-General of the Conference, in his address to this body on 31 January, brought to our attention the horrifying disproportion between expenditure on arms and the resources deployed for aid. Are we not all accountable for this, not only to those in despair due to poverty, hunger, diseases or natural calamities in today's world, as well as to the next generations? Therefore, the stakes are high and multidimensional. Progress on disarmament and non-proliferation is vital, and the Conference on Disarmament continues to be indispensable to developing the necessary rules and instruments to strengthen compliance and verification.

We should also keep in mind that the work of the Conference on Disarmament is one of the litmus tests for multilateralism, which the family of nations is much more in need of today.

On the agenda that we adopted at the first plenary, the four core issues of the Conference, to which Turkey also attaches importance, are maintained. To bring the CD back to work on those issues, various efforts have been made in previous years to reach an agreement on the programme of work. The five Ambassadors' proposal, which, if we were to take a roll-call, would command the widest cross-group support in this body, was followed by further attempts, both formal and informal. We believe that these efforts ought to continue so that the deadlock in the CD may be broken.

As highlighted by you and a number of delegations in their statements, there are also new issues, the discussion of which may indeed prove fruitful. We share the understanding that the new issues are not to be substitutes for the four core issues on the agenda, which maintains their priority. Naturally, the new issues must be in line with the disarmament and arms control mandate of the CD. My delegation will study any such proposal from that perspective.

In the context, as a main co-sponsor of the United Nations General Assembly resolution on the prevention of the illicit transfer and unauthorized access to and use of man-portable air defence systems, I welcome the proposal by Australia to include MANPADS for consideration during the 2006 session of this Conference from the same perspective.

(Mr. Kurttekin, Turkey)

Mr. President, in concluding, let me welcome your commitment to provide the Conference, on behalf of the P6, with a timetable for our work this year, to which we are looking forward. We also welcome the Friends of the Presidents, who will assist the P6 in informal consultations. My delegation will continue to support efforts to put the Conference on Disarmament back on track.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Kurttekin of Turkey for his statement, and I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan, Ms. Tehmina Janjua.

Ms. JANJUA (Pakistan): Mr. President, to begin with, we would like to convey our sincere condolences to the Polish Government and to the families affected by the Katowice accident. We congratulate you once again on your assumption of the presidency. We hope that under your leadership, and with your energetic endeavours, we will be able to have success in getting a comprehensive and balanced programme of work. Pakistan supports all efforts to find a way out of the current stalemate in the CD.

Your choice of Friends of the Presidents could not have been better. Every one of the distinguished Ambassadors in the Friends of the Presidents has outstanding credentials and experience in dealing with disarmament and arms control issues, and in the work of the CD. The functional utility of setting up the group of Friends of the Presidents, however, has to be seen and confirmed. I reiterate that we all consider ourselves to be friends of the President.

On the programme of work, which is comprehensive and balanced, my delegation has already stated its position in previous meetings of the CD. We would like to state once again that we are convinced that the A-5 proposal continues to hold the largest amount of support with the CD. The A-5 proposal - even if it is not fully satisfactory for us - can help the CD get jump-started and moving.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ms. Janjua of Pakistan for her statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

This concludes my list of speakers for today. Does any delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? I recognize the distinguished representative of Chile.

Mr. EGUIGUREN (Chile) (translated from Spanish): First of all I would like to add my delegation's condolences to you and the Government of Poland in connection with the tragic accident that took place some days ago.

Mr. President, I would like to reaffirm our appreciation and support for the decision taken by the six Presidents for the year 2006 to work together. This will avoid a situation where we have six isolated exercises of bilateral consultations and the search for formulas which will allow progress, and instead we will have integrated work which will begin now and encompass the whole of 2006. Therefore we hope that we will be able to obtain good results in this regard.

(Mr. Eguiguren, Chile)

The six Presidents wished to follow this major step with another, namely the establishment of this group of Friends of the Presidents for the year 2006, and invited six ambassadors to help them in their efforts. On behalf of Ambassador Martabit, I would like to thank you and the other Presidents for having invited him to participate in this group of Friends, and I would like to say that the delegation of Chile is at your disposal. You and the other Presidents may count on our willingness to cooperate with any efforts which may be made henceforth to move the Conference forward. This has been the spirit nurtured by our country as a member of the Conference on Disarmament. We participate in the five Ambassadors' proposal in this spirit, with the aim of trying to help the Conference on Disarmament to function as it should. We see that there is great support for the five Ambassadors' proposal - we have heard so today and on other occasions, and we think that this proposal can be improved upon if that would make it possible to increase the level of support for it.

I would also like to refer to a subject which was mentioned by the Ambassador of Australia in his recent statement, relating to portable air defence systems. We believe that it is so important, in respect of the problem created by the proliferation of these types of weapons for international peace and security, in the event that they fall into the hands of non-State actors. Hence its importance, and this topic has been dealt with in our forums, but I would like to highlight what has been said by the Ambassador of Australia and also the Ambassador of Turkey with respect to the treatment of this in the First Committee of the General Assembly, where the resolution on the subject enjoyed consensus on the part of all members.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of Chile, and I recognize the distinguished representative of Algeria.

Mr. KHELIF (Algeria) (translated from Arabic): First of all, I would like to join my colleagues in expressing my condolences to the Polish people and the families of the victims of the tragic accident which happened recently in their country.

The delegation of Algeria did not really want to take the floor, but the very rich discussion and the proposals that we have heard have today make it incumbent on us to address a number of points.

My delegation will support any effort to get the Conference out of this stalemate. We encourage your efforts, Sir, to hold consultations on issues that might be included in a programme of work in the light of the agenda that has been adopted. We look forward to a timetable of the kind which you proposed on 9 February.

We have heard some important proposals from a number of delegations concerning issues to be included in the agenda that has already been adopted. Now, of course, every delegation has the right to raise any point which it feels is important in accordance with the Conference's rules of procedure. In your earlier statement, Mr. President, you said that the agenda had some flexibility built in to it, which would allow the Conference to discuss any issues affecting international peace and security. The Presidential statement made following the adoption of the agenda, at our first plenary meeting, made it clear that any issue relating to

(Mr. Khelif, Algeria)

international peace and security could be discussed under the agenda, if there was a consensus on such a discussion. My delegation would therefore like to endorse the statement by the Ambassador of the Russian Federation on the conditions attached to the discussion of any topic. So, I wonder how we are to proceed. Are we going to wait for you to present a timetable for orderly discussion of the important issues which we heard raised today, or will our silence be taken as consent? I would like you to clarify this matter.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of Algeria for his statement, and of course, we shall study everything and give the Conference proposals soon as to our calendar.

Does any delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? That does not seem to be the case, so before concluding today's plenary, please allow me to convey to all delegations thanks for the very interesting discussion which I hope will start a successful dialogue in this room. Today's statements often referred to those made earlier. I hope that this spirit of dialogue will further develop in the CD during this year's session.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Tuesday, 7 February, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.