

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE ONE THOUSAND AND FORTY-EIGHTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Wednesday, 24 January 2007, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Ms. Glaudine MTSHALI (South Africa)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 1048th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I have the following speakers for this plenary meeting: Japan, Germany, on behalf of the EU, France, Kenya, Italy, Indonesia, the Republic of Korea and Egypt.

I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Japan, Mr. Sumio Tarui.

Mr. TARUI (Japan): Madam President, thank you for your kind words of welcome on Monday. Furthermore, since this is the first time for my delegation to take the floor in a formal plenary, allow me to congratulate you on the assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament (CD). You can be assured of our full support as you guide us through this critical period of the year.

Last year, under the six Presidents' initiative, intensive discussions on each agenda item were carried out through the structured, focused debates on the traditional CD agenda. This year, the CD needs to build on these developments and prove that it can contribute to the formation of international disarmament and non-proliferation norms. Japan is convinced the proposed organizational framework could facilitate the achievement of this objective if the CD member States work actively within it. In this connection, Japan supports the framework and commends the efforts of this year's six CD Presidents in its formulation, and urges its early adoption.

Japan attaches paramount importance to the early commencement of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or nuclear explosive devices (FMCT). We take note that in the recent informal consultations, Madam President, you indicated that at present there was no consensus for the commencement of negotiations on any one issue or combination of issues. However, it is also a significant fact that no country, including any nuclear-weapon State, has voiced opposition to the negotiation of an FMCT itself in the CD, even though a range of opinions with regard to the whole CD schedule exist. Japan aims to enhance deliberations on the substance of an FMCT for the early conclusion of negotiations once they begin, through specific comments on the draft treaty and working papers already circulated.

On the other hand, when the time comes to discuss the other main CD agenda items - nuclear disarmament, NSA and PAROS - as well as other items, Japan is committed to engaging in active debate in accordance with the CD schedule.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of Japan for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Germany, Ambassador Ruediger Luedeking, Deputy Commissioner of the German Federal Government for Arms Control and Disarmament. He will make a statement on behalf of the EU.

Mr. LUEDEKING (Germany): Madam President, I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the European Union. I would, first of all, like to congratulate you on the assumption of the post of President of the Conference on Disarmament. I can assure you of the European Union's full support in your efforts to guide the work of this Conference.

(Mr. Luedeking, Germany)

We are at the start of a new year and a new annual session of this Conference. The EU has been encouraged by the structured and substantive debates conducted during last year's session. A new momentum has developed as a result of the initiative taken jointly by the six Presidents of the CD last year. This has created the hope that the deadlock in the work of the CD can be overcome and substantive negotiating work be resumed.

We very much welcome and encourage the efforts undertaken by you, Madam President, and the other CD Presidents of 2007 to take up the relay baton from last year's P-6 and bring CD activities to even more fruition in 2007. In particular, we highly commend the meticulous way in which you gathered the view of every single CD member State and managed to merge all these views into a coherent organizational framework for this year's activities in this Conference.

The EU supports the view that the traditional agenda of the Conference on Disarmament and the rules of procedure allow every CD member to raise any security issue relevant to the work of the Conference. In this perspective, the EU urges all CD member States to swiftly adopt the agenda as proposed by the six Presidents of 2007 to be able to start its work immediately.

I would also like to avail myself of this opportunity to recall the EU's attachment to the follow-up of the enlargement process of the CD - and in particular to those members of the EU which are not yet members of the CD and which have submitted a request for admission to the Conference.

The EU is strongly committed to reaching consensus on a programme of work and supports all genuine efforts undertaken to that end. We welcome the new ideas and proposals that have been put forward to that end over the last few years.

Getting the CD back to fulfilling its function as the single multilateral forum at the disposal of the international community for disarmament negotiations is all the more important against the backdrop of the security challenges that we are facing today. The threats to our security are more diverse, less visible and less predictable. Non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control remain indispensable elements of cooperative security between States and are essential for effectively addressing those threats.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery is potentially the greatest risk to our security. The EU has developed a comprehensive Strategy against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, which was adopted by the European Council on 12 December 2003. In this Strategy, the EU again expressed its conviction that a multilateralist approach to security, including disarmament and non-proliferation, provides the best way to maintain international order. This conviction determines our overall approach to meeting today's security challenges.

In this vein the EU has been and continues to be committed to making a constructive contribution to the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

The EU attaches high priority to the negotiation of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. We call for the

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immediate commencement of such negotiations here in the Conference on Disarmament. The new momentum which was created in the course of last year's discussions on the subject must be seized.

It again became clear last year that there continue to be some differences regarding individual aspects of a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT), in particular relating to verification and scope. However, rather than continuing protracted debates on these aspects, the EU believes that the negotiations should start without delay and without preconditions, bearing in mind the 1995 Special Coordinator's report and the mandate contained therein. The early conclusion of a non-discriminatory, universally applicable treaty should remain our goal. Pending the achievement of this goal, the EU urges all States to declare and uphold a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. We welcome the action of those four States which have decreed such moratoria and urge others to follow suit.

In the structured debates during last year's session of the Conference on Disarmament the EU also set out its views regarding other important issues on the agenda of the CD. Thus, for example, we recalled our support for pursuing the consideration of the issue of security assurances to the non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT. Such assurances can play an important role: they can serve both as an incentive to forgo the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction and as a deterrent. We called on nuclear-weapon States to reaffirm the existing security assurances noted by the United Nations Security Council in its resolution 984 and to sign and ratify the relevant protocols on nuclear-weapon-free zones, drawn up following the requisite consultations, recognizing that treaty-based security assurances are available to such zones.

In addition, in last year's structured debates in the CD, many EU member States also expressed their views on the issue of nuclear disarmament.

I would also like to recall the statement that was made by the Austrian presidency of the EU in June last year on PAROS. With it, the EU reiterated its clear commitment to preventing an arms race in outer space. Preventing an arms race in outer space is an essential condition for the strengthening of strategic stability and for the promotion of international cooperation in the free exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes by all States.

The EU is very concerned about a recent test of an anti-satellite weapon. Such a test is inconsistent with international efforts to avert an arms race in outer space. In this context, the EU calls upon all signatory States to the Outer Space Treaty to abide by their commitment to exercise their space activities in accordance with international law and in the interest of maintaining international peace and security.

We consider, inter alia, all these issues to be important matters to be dealt with in the CD. We wish to see the concerns of all addressed substantively and concretely. We believe that progress can best be achieved with a combination of prioritizing and at the same time allowing

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for just and meaningful consideration of the concerns of all. The EU is ready to engage in constructive and results-oriented work in the course of this year's session of the Conference on Disarmament.

Getting the Conference on Disarmament back to substantive work, and in particular starting negotiations on an FMCT, would have a significant positive impact on the next NPT review process, which starts at the end of April with the first session of the Preparatory Committee in Vienna.

The NPT Review Conference in 2005 was unable to agree on a substantive final document to address the most pressing challenges to the Treaty. This provides the EU with an extra reason to put all efforts into a successful review in 2010. The EU believes that the prevention of nuclear proliferation and the pursuit of nuclear disarmament in accordance with article VI of the NPT are essential for global peace and security. We are therefore firmly committed to the objective of strengthening the international nuclear non-proliferation regime as underlined in the EU's common position of 25 April 2005, by which we stand. The EU continues to support the decisions and resolution adopted at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference and the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference, and will bear in mind the current situation. We will strive to preserve the authority and integrity of the NPT.

We note that the final report, which includes the programme of work, adopted by consensus at the 2005 NPT Review Conference, constitutes a reference for the future review process. The EU is committed to contributing actively to a successful outcome of the first Preparatory Committee meeting in Vienna. We pledge our full support to the chairman of the first Preparatory Committee session, Ambassador Amano of Japan, and we hope that his consultations to prepare the ground for the outcome of the first session, as well as on its agenda, are successful in order for that first session to proceed to substantive work, pursuant to the existing agreements among the NPT States parties relating to the strengthening and the improved effectiveness of the review process. We are looking forward to fruitful and substantive discussions with a view to building consensus on the three mutually reinforcing pillars of the NPT: non-proliferation, disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

I would also like to reaffirm the EU's strong support for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which we consider as one of the pivotal pillars in the non-proliferation and disarmament framework, together with an FMCT and as part of the 1995 agreement by States parties to the NPT. The early entry into force of the CTBT was recognized at the 2000 Review Conference of the NPT as a practical step to achieving the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation objectives of the NPT.

It has been 11 years now since the CTBT was opened for signature. The entry into force of the Treaty is more urgent today than ever before. The recent nuclear tests conducted by the DPRK again demonstrated the importance of the CTBT and the value of the international monitoring system, which is still expanding. The Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO provides invaluable legal and technical information and advice in this respect.

(Mr. Luedeking, Germany)

The EU welcomes the fact that the CTBT has achieved near-universal adherence. Of the 44 States whose ratification is necessary for the entry into force of the Treaty, 10 have yet to ratify the Treaty. We particularly call on those States to do so without delay and without conditions. This would also contribute to the positive atmosphere needed for the NPT Review Conference in 2010.

The importance of maintaining the authority and integrity of the NPT is underlined by the serious regional proliferation challenges that the international community is facing.

The EU fully shares the concern over Iran's nuclear programme expressed by the IAEA Board of Governors and the United Nations Security Council. We welcome the unanimous adoption of Security Council resolution 1737 in reaction to Iran's failure to take the steps repeatedly required by the IAEA Board of Governors and the United Nations Security Council. The resolution represents a necessary and proportionate response to Iran's disregard for the concerns of the international community and for Security Council resolution 1696.

The EU will ensure the effective implementation of the measures contained in that resolution, which are targeted against the most proliferation-sensitive parts of the Iranian nuclear and missile programmes that are of concern. We call on all States also to implement the measures in full and without delay.

The EU is disappointed that Iran has reacted negatively to the resolution and that it has as yet not taken any steps to comply with it. We welcome the Security Council's decisions to request a report by the IAEA Director General within 60 days, and to review Iran's action in the light of that report.

To avoid any misunderstanding, I believe it bears repeating at this juncture that there is no dispute whatsoever about Iran's rights under the NPT. The issue at stake is Iran's failure to build the necessary confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of its nuclear programme. The pursuit of a secret nuclear programme relating to the most sensitive parts of the nuclear fuel cycle over more than 18 years, Iran's documented record of concealment, which has resulted in many failures and breaches of its obligation to comply with its NPT safeguards agreement, as well as the fact that IAEA is not yet in a position to clarify some important outstanding issues relating to Iran's nuclear programme, are at the heart of the matter. I would like again to emphasize - as is done in United Nations Security Council resolution 1737 - the importance of political and diplomatic efforts to find a solution guaranteeing that Iran's nuclear programme is exclusively for peaceful purposes. I would also like to avail myself of this opportunity again to stress the EU's continuing support for efforts to find a negotiated long-term solution. Therefore we urgently call on Iran, consistent with the Security Council's decision, to suspend all enrichment-related activities to allow a return to the negotiating table.

The EU also continues to be gravely concerned by the situation on the Korean peninsula. We strongly condemn the provocative missile test launches performed by the DPRK in July 2006 and the nuclear test conducted by it in October 2006. We deplore the fact that the DPRK continues to defy the international community and disregard its obligations under the

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relevant statement and resolutions of the United Nations Security Council. The EU fully supports the most recent resolution (1718) adopted by the Security Council on 14 October 2006 and is committed to the full implementation of the measures contained therein.

We call on the DPRK to observe its obligations under the NPT, refrain from any further tests of a nuclear device and re-establish the moratorium on long-range missile testing. The EU fully endorses the diplomatic efforts undertaken in the framework of the six-party talks. We regret that the most recent round of these talks has not produced any results. We call on the DPRK to adopt a constructive attitude to the talks and work towards the implementation of the joint statement of September 2005 and, in particular, verifiably abandon all nuclear-weapons programmes and ambitions.

I have so far mainly dealt with nuclear issues - mainly, but not exclusively, I should add. However, this should not detract from other important tasks on the disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation agenda this year. These tasks are manifold and include a broad range of issues also relating to conventional weapons, in particular small arms and light weapons. It would go well beyond what is possible in my statement today if I were to try to deal with these issues in an even remotely adequate or balanced way. Let me therefore only make a few additional remarks on issues other than nuclear weapons.

I would particularly like to draw attention to two successes of last year in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. First, the third Review Conference of the CCW agreed on a substantive final document that will enhance the instrument. Secondly, I would like to draw attention to the sixth Review Conference of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. It has made an important contribution to the further strengthening of the effectiveness of that instrument. The international community now has the responsibility to promptly, concretely and effectively implement the decisions contained in the Final Document of the Review Conference. The adoption of a new intersessional work programme, leading to the seventh Review Conference to be held not later than 2011, is a significant achievement. The EU is committed to making the best use of the opportunities provided by it and will promote successful outcomes of the meetings in the intersessional period.

Both these achievements that I mentioned, jointly with the revitalization of the CD experienced last year, make a contribution towards overcoming the stalemate in the field of disarmament and should provide a new impetus for the work within our Conference.

In conclusion, I would like to touch upon the fact that 29 April of this year marks the tenth anniversary of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention. With the second Review Conference of the implementation of that treaty due to take place in April 2008, this year provides an opportunity to take stock of the successful operation of that treaty so far and of what remains to be done. This anniversary should also remind us what, political will permitting, the Conference on Disarmament can achieve.

The CWC ranks among the most ambitious and complex international projects as yet undertaken in our field. The successful negotiation of this treaty should encourage us to overcome the stalemate which has characterized the CD for the last 10 years, and start another

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ambitious project. The FMCT provides the opportunity that waits to be seized. We call upon all partners in the Conference to take a constructive approach towards the FMCT as one of the most pressing items on the CD agenda. Starting FMCT negotiations will underscore the relevance of a multilateralist approach to security and testify to our commitment to a multilateral treaty system, which provides the legal and normative basis for all non-proliferation efforts.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Germany, speaking on behalf of the EU, for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of France, Mr. Jean-François Dobelle.

Mr. DOBELLE (France) (spoke in French): Madam President, as I am taking the floor for the first time during a formal plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament, allow me first of all to congratulate you on taking the Chair and the way in which you have been guiding our work up until now. In particular, I would like to tell you how much we appreciate the great professionalism and skill you have displayed in bringing us to the point we have reached today, something which was not a foregone conclusion. Each and every one of us recognizes the usefulness of the intensive consultations that you have held since last autumn on the way in which you and the five other Presidents of the 2007 session of the Conference on Disarmament are planning to organize our work this year, and I think we are all aware that we are on the right track, the only one which enables us to hope that we will make further progress this year in revitalizing this Conference. My delegation believes that we must be guided by a concern to preserve what was achieved in 2006, and if possible to build on it so as to sustain the momentum that was started last year. In order to do so we must work in a pragmatic way, as we did in 2006, to adopt a programme of activities which will allow us to work in an effective and concrete manner. This type of approach would be conducive to later agreement on a programme of work.

Madam President, we consider that the organization of work that you are proposing for this session offers the best possible compromise and will allow us to take up all the agenda items in a balanced way and to identify those which deserve more specific attention, in the light of the interest shown during the discussions. Therefore we can support this proposal. We would like the other member States of the Conference to lend their support to this proposal, and, when it is put into effect, to show open-mindedness concerning the working method that we might adopt. What is important is to carry out productive work on the subjects that we have to deal with within an open approach. My delegation expresses its confidence in the work of the six Presidents and considers that the approach that has been proposed today offers the Conference the best prospects for progress, following on from the method introduced in 2006. Rest assured that France will spare no effort to allow this forum to fully play its rightful role. In this spirit, we will not fail to remind you over the next few months of our keen desire that the Conference on Disarmament should remain fully relevant by adopting an open, constructive and pragmatic approach.

My German colleague, speaking on behalf of the European Union, particularly stressed the priority which its 27 members attached to the immediate launching without preconditions of the process of negotiating a treaty banning the production of fissile material for military purposes. This concern is of course a fundamental element in my country's position at the national level, as was pointed out by the French President during the speech he delivered at Ile Longue a year ago.

(Mr. Dobelle, France)

This being so, France considers that the *raison d'être* of this forum is also to work towards an approach to disarmament which can help to lighten the heavy toll that humanity pays in the excessive number of conflicts in which it is involved and to contribute to regional security. In this context, we must bear in mind the fact that it is conventional weapons which kill more than 500,000 persons each year in the world. This is why I would like to express the hope that this year we can, during consideration of the relevant items, study the question of the control of conventional weapons more thoroughly than in the past. Several pertinent proposals have been made by other delegations, and we support them. We are among those countries which are seriously concerned over the question of illicit transfers of conventional weapons, including portable anti-aircraft missile systems (MANPADS), to terrorist groups. Need we remind that a plan to attack a civilian aircraft using this type of weapon was foiled last year here in Geneva?

Multilaterally, significant progress was made last year outside the Conference in the area of control of conventional weapons and the proliferation of such weapons. The First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolutions which my delegation keenly supported on the drafting of a treaty on the arms trade and the question of stockpiles of ammunition above and beyond the levels required for defence purpose. In the context of the 1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, we also made progress under the chairmanship of my predecessor on the question of explosive remnants of war. We also agreed on a final document which will strengthen this instrument. Of course it is not our purpose here to duplicate the excellent work being done in other forums, but rather to ensure that the Conference fully plays its role as a standing body and forum for exchanges of views on all questions relating to disarmament, non-proliferation and international security. As part of this open and flexible approach, which makes it possible to deal with the control of weapons which are the most deadly today, my delegation would also be prepared to keep the Conference informed of the initiative which my country has been guiding at various levels concerning efforts to combat the unlawful transport of small arms and light weapons by air.

Madam President, I would not like to delay any further the progress of our work and the handling of the essential item before us today, that is, the adoption of our agenda. You know our views on its wording, which we think is no longer properly adapted to the current security issues. This point of view is unchanged since last year. However, we are prepared to work with this wording in accordance with the usual conditions and reservations, so as not to block the introduction of the excellent programme of activities which has been proposed to us and which we strongly support.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of France for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now call upon the distinguished representative of Kenya, Ambassador Maria Nzomo.

Ms. NZOMO (Kenya): Madam President, I take this opportunity to congratulate you on your assumption of this important post of President of the Conference on Disarmament. I am confident that you will successfully steer the work of the Conference to greater heights. With your well-renowned diplomatic skills and depth of knowledge I am confident that you will succeed.

(Mr. Nzomo, Kenya)

My delegation is particularly pleased that another daughter of the African soil is presiding over the Conference at the beginning of the year 2007. Kenya was privileged to be in the same position exactly three years ago, at the beginning of 2004. We are therefore conscious of the challenges posed by being the first President at the beginning of the year, but we are encouraged by the efforts you have made in carrying out a wide range of consultations to ensure that the Conference adopts the agenda and programme of work without delay. We lend our full support to the programme you have put in place together with your five co-Presidents.

I also wish to thank you for the kind words of welcome you extended to me and other new members at the first plenary meeting of the Conference on Monday. I wish to assure you of my delegation's full support as we embark on a new year with more focused discussions on the key issues before the Conference.

It is indeed an honour and privilege for me personally to join this distinguished group of Ambassadors to the Conference on Disarmament. But as an active member of the Conference, Kenya has remained concerned over the lack of significant progress that has characterized the Conference for close to a decade.

We believe that an incremental and coordinated approach would lead to the development of a comprehensive plan of action for the attainment of a nuclear-free world. This should be based on the 13 practical steps agreed upon in the year 2000 under the auspices of the NPT, as well as the recommendations of the A-5.

We appeal to all members of the Conference to rededicate themselves to the course of nuclear disarmament and arm control. Disarmament is indeed an important pillar in global efforts to achieve international peace and security. It cannot be overemphasized that development cannot be achieved without peace and security.

In this regard, my delegation is of the view that the Conference must focus on and take concrete steps towards nuclear disarmament which are achievable in the short term while at the same time embarking on a path towards a comprehensive nuclear disarmament regime.

Kenya firmly believes that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are two sides of the same coin that must be pursued simultaneously. A selective approach can only lead to further discordance and stalemate. It is only through flexibility and compromise that multilateral diplomacy can succeed.

I assure you of my delegation's cooperation in your efforts in this important endeavour.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of Kenya for her statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now call upon the distinguished representative of Italy, Ambassador Carlo Trezza.

Mr. TREZZA (Italy): I would like to start by fully sharing the statement made by Ambassador Ruediger Luedeking on behalf of the European Union, and express my appreciation of the fact that he came all the way from Berlin to deliver his statement.

(Mr. Trezza, Italy)

During 2006, the Conference on Disarmament was still unable to perform its main institutional role of conducting substantive negotiations on primary questions of disarmament. However, as stated in the consensual United Nations General Assembly resolution 61/99, “active discussions [were] held on the programme of work” as well as “increased deliberations of the Conference due to the constructive contribution of its member States, focused structured debates on all agenda items including with the participation of experts from capitals, and cooperation among all six Presidents of the Conference in the 2006 session”.

The same resolution stressed the urgent need for the Conference to commence its substantive work at the beginning of its 2007 session and recognized the addresses of the Secretary-General of the United Nations as well as those by eight Ministers for Foreign Affairs and other high-ranking dignitaries as an expression of support for the endeavours of the Conference. In its operative part, the resolution called for intensified consultation with a view to reaching agreement on a programme of work.

This is the moment to reiterate our gratitude to the previous six Presidents, Ambassador Zdzisław Rapacki (Poland), Ambassador Park In-kook (Republic of Korea), Ambassador Romulus Costea (Romania), Ambassador Valery Loshchinin (Russian Federation), Ambassador Ousmane Camara (Senegal) and Ambassador Anton Pinter (Slovakia) for their efforts last year. The cooperation they established among themselves allowed the CD to reach a better understanding of all issues, and to achieve meaningful progress.

This is also the moment to express our congratulations to the South African presidency and to you personally, Madam, and to acknowledge the intensive consultations you held during the intersessional period. I wish to extend those congratulations to the incoming Presidents, Ambassadors Juan Antonio March Pujol (Spain), Sarala Fernando (Sri Lanka), Elisabet Borsiin Bonnier (Sweden), Jürg Streuli (Switzerland) and Bashar Ja’afari (Syria), and express our satisfaction for the spirit of cooperation they have already established among themselves in order to ensure continuity and consistency in our deliberations.

The Conference, as stated in our rules of procedure, must adopt its agenda for the year at the beginning of each annual session. We are confident that we shall be able to adopt the agenda as soon as possible. As a “Friend” of last year’s Presidents I assisted them in the task of reviewing the agenda. At the end of that review, my delegation found that the agenda was inclusive and did not limit the CD’s work. It was appropriate for dealing with current disarmament and security issues, comprehensive and flexible enough to accommodate all issues of concern. I take note of the remarks made by the Ambassador of France on this issue, and like France, my delegation can accept that last year’s arrangement for the agenda should serve as a basis for our activities this year. On that basis we should determine which concrete items of the broad agenda are mature for substantive work and which items need further discussion.

We hope that through those preliminary deliberations it will be possible to reach a stage where it appears that there is a basis for negotiations on specific issues.

In that case, and in accordance with rule 23 of the rules of procedure, the Conference may establish subsidiary bodies such as ad hoc subcommittees, working groups, technical groups or

(Mr. Trezza, Italy)

groups of governmental experts. As demonstrated last year, the Presidents have a wide range of discretion in finding the best way to assess issues which are mature for more substantive deliberations and negotiations.

The work done in the past years, and in particular during 2006, as well as the indications received by delegations this year, should be taken into account in determining our priorities.

I would like to conclude by underlining the importance to be attached to high-level political participation in our deliberations. Thanks to the joint invitation last year of the President and the Secretary-General of the Conference, many dignitaries addressed the Conference on Disarmament during its 2006 session. We are of the opinion that such invitations should be extended this year not only to all Foreign Ministers of member States but also to other dignitaries, and in particular to the heads of international organizations and institutions which deal with the issues relevant to the Conference on Disarmament. We refer, for instance, to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Director General of IAEA, the Chairperson of the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly and other interested international high officials, including representatives of parliamentary bodies. Upgrading the level of participation is a way of crafting the political consciousness and political will which are necessary for the Conference to resume its work. In the same spirit, we encourage delegations to ask their capitals to include references to the Conference on Disarmament in their high-level national and collective statements or documents. We also believe that some steps forward could be made in acknowledging the attention and contribution that non-governmental organizations present in Geneva dedicate to our deliberations.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of Italy for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now call upon the distinguished representative of Indonesia, Ambassador Makarim Wibisono.

Mr. WIBISONO (Indonesia): Madam President, let me join my other colleagues in extending to you our heartfelt congratulations on your appointment as the President of the Conference on Disarmament. We trust that under your able leadership, this Conference will be successful in achieving a more constructive result within the scope of disarmament efforts. You can be assured of my delegation's full support and cooperation in the discharge of our duty. I would also like to express our sincere appreciation to all the forthcoming Presidents of the 2007 session for their initiatives to have a concerted presidency throughout the year, and wish them all great success in leading our deliberations.

Every time the Conference on Disarmament commences its work, there is always the hope that the new session will bring forth fresh ideas so that the Conference can make progress and achieve a tangible outcome in the area of disarmament. This common expectation has long remained unfulfilled, and the Conference cannot let this hope remain unanswered.

As a result of the slow progress of the reduction and abolishment of weapons of mass destruction, and in particular of nuclear weapons, as well as the increase in the production and sophistication of conventional weapons, the task of addressing them has become more daunting. This will entail extra efforts on the part of member States and closer cooperation between them.

(Mr. Wibisono, Indonesia)

In the meantime, there is growing concern at the emergence of new challenges, such as the illicit use and transfer of small arms and conventional weapons in the world's conflict areas as well as into the hands of terrorists. These challenges need to be addressed collectively, and to this end, this Conference must demonstrate its willingness and resolve in this historic forum.

At this early stage, Indonesia is of the view that the current agenda as contained in document CD/WP.545 reflects the needs and challenges this august body needs to address. Such a flexible agenda allows member countries to include any issues they deem necessary under any one item. In this context, Indonesia has no objection to supporting the adoption of the above-mentioned agenda for 2007.

Indonesia believes that the problems linked to disarmament and non-proliferation - whether they pertain to WMD or to conventional weapons - involve too great a risk to be addressed unilaterally. Given its significant ramifications, disarmament needs to be tackled using a more comprehensive framework that is based on mutual trust. Therefore, Indonesia is of the view that a multilateral and inclusive approach should be used as the basis of our work.

Finally, allow me to also take this opportunity to share with you the news that the Indonesian Government has approved the ratification of the Convention on anti-personnel landmines. I am pleased to convey to you that Indonesia will soon be joining more than 150 States parties to the Ottawa Convention and will be contributing actively to the creation of a mine-free world.

Indonesia is neither a producer of landmines nor a mine-affected country; however, it shares the general concern at the horrendous effects of anti-personnel landmines, especially as they mostly affect civilians and children. Therefore, this ratification process once again testifies to Indonesia's unswerving commitment to the advancement of disarmament efforts.

To conclude, I would like to express my sincere hope that the concerted efforts of the P-6, combined with a positive spirit of cooperation on the part of the member countries, will ensure that this Conference can truly start working towards achieving disarmament.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of Indonesia for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now call upon the distinguished representative of the Republic of Korea, Ambassador Dong-hee Chang.

Mr. CHANG (Republic of Korea): Madam President, at the outset, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the first presidency of the 2007 Conference on Disarmament. I am confident that your wisdom and leadership will guide our deliberations to a successful beginning of this year's work. I take this opportunity to assure you of the full cooperation of my delegation during the course of our discussions.

Our work this year has a particular importance as it will set the tone for the future viability of the CD. Building upon the progress we made last year, we should intensify and deepen our understanding with a view to reaching a consensual decision on the programme of work. We should strive diligently not to lose the momentum created by last year's discussions.

(Mr. Chang, Republic of Korea)

In this regard, my delegation welcomes the concerted efforts by this year's six Presidents to come up with the common initiative outlined by you on 15 January. We believe that the common approach, which includes holding intensified discussions on all agenda items aimed at elaborating priority issues for further discussion and the appointment of coordinators for each agenda item, will serve as a solid basis for advancing our work.

To make the most of your initiative, it would be desirable for a more detailed organizational framework with a specific timetable for each meeting to be circulated as early as possible. Doing so would allow sufficient time for full preparation by the members. We also believe that the introduction of an indicative list of subtopics for key agenda items would help our deliberations be more interactive and focused. In addition, such a list would help members to decide on the timing of inviting experts from their capitals.

It is our earnest hope that at the end of the first 10 weeks we will be able to evaluate the level of evolution of each agenda item and then make a decision about how to move forward. As emphasized on many previous occasions, my delegation believes that an FMCT is the only issue ripe for negotiations in the CD. However, we are ready to actively participate in the discussions on the other agenda items as well, without prejudice to the result of such deliberations.

As for the 2007 CD agenda, we fully support the draft agenda contained in CD/WP.545. My delegation believes that the current agenda is broad and inclusive enough for any member to raise any issue of concern related to international peace and security. Having said that, I hope that we will be able to swiftly adopt the agenda and to begin substantive work as soon as possible and in a positive frame of mind.

In conclusion, I once again would like to express my delegation's gratitude for the collective and concerted efforts that this year's six Presidents have shown in the preparation of the work of the CD, and we sincerely hope that through our deliberations this year we will be able to finally put the CD back to work.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of the Republic of Korea for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now call upon the representative of Egypt, Mr. Meleka.

Mr. MELEKA (Egypt): Madam President, let me at the outset congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. We are confident of your ability to manage our work in view of your exceptional diplomatic skills and deep knowledge of the issues. I would like to assure you and all six Presidents of the Conference of my delegation's full support during the year, wishing you all success in your endeavours.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation to the former Presidents of the CD during the previous session, among them Ambassador Anton Pinter, your immediate predecessor, who successfully managed the final part of the 2006 session of the Conference. I also want to express deep appreciation to all the staff of the CD for their efforts in facilitating our work.

(Mr. Meleka, Egypt)

Madam President, you assume the presidency of the CD at an important juncture full of challenges. We all need to strive to reverse the negative effects of inaction that have plagued the Conference in recent years and indeed have cast shadows of doubt over the relevance of multilateral efforts in the field of disarmament. The continuation of this state can only adversely affect our common efforts to enhance international peace and security and decrease tensions. We stand today at a crossroads concerning the future of the Conference on Disarmament and multilateral disarmament efforts in general. It is absolutely clear that the Conference on Disarmament continues to witness difficulties, both structural and substantive. It is imperative that we clearly examine how to deal with this situation.

To do so, we must deal with the core problem, which lies in the lack of political will of some member States to address disarmament within the context of the CD, based on agreed priorities. Any genuine movement in the Conference on Disarmament will not materialize unless our collective interests and agreed priorities are equally considered, devoid of selectivity. It is inconceivable that a particular issue could be imposed in order to fulfil self-interest, without considering the needs of others. International public opinion along with the majority of States Members of the United Nations are eager to achieve substantive, tangible results in this new session of the CD in order to break the pattern of stagnation and frustration which has characterized the work of the CD in the last years.

We have recently examined the draft organizational framework which you have prepared in coordination with the six other Presidents of the Conference. We hope that it will provide us with a productive outcome. I would also like to welcome the idea of appointing a coordinator for each agenda item. We support all initiatives and proposals that seek to facilitate the work of the Conference, and we wish all seven coordinators all the best in their difficult task. My delegation is prepared to offer full support and assistance to them.

Egypt has always called for the adoption of a comprehensive and balanced programme of work for the Conference on Disarmament which would take into account the priorities of the international community based on the results of the first special session of the General Assembly of the United Nations on disarmament, SSOD-1. We have always been committed to reaching consensus on a programme of work. It is inconceivable that any programme of work would deviate from recognized commitments undertaken by member States.

Egypt's determined commitment to achieve general and complete disarmament is unrelenting. We strongly believe in the necessity to eliminate all weapons of mass destruction, particular nuclear weapons. Nuclear disarmament will remain our top priority in the Conference, and we believe that it should remain at the forefront of the Conference's work in its new session, not only due to the priority it was given in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly of the United Nations on disarmament, but more importantly due to the devastating destructive nature of nuclear weapons, which necessitates their elimination for the preservation of mankind. Members of the Conference on Disarmament have a responsibility before the international community to achieve that objective. It is imperative to listen to the voice of the majority of States, international organizations, non-governmental organizations and civil society which warn of the dangers that nuclear weapons pose to international peace and security.

(Mr. Meleka, Egypt)

It will be regrettable if the Conference on Disarmament remains unable to take any effective steps towards nuclear disarmament. We fail to understand and refuse to accept the contradictory argument that supports the doctrine of nuclear deterrence while advocating the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. We reaffirm our principled position in support of the total elimination of all weapons of mass destruction, and in particular nuclear weapons. We call once again on the nuclear-weapon States to undertake their responsibilities, as stipulated in article VI of the NPT, in order to preserve international peace and security and the credibility of the Treaty. We equally call on all Parties to faithfully and strictly comply with its provisions and work to guarantee its universality.

In this context, we reiterate our commitment to the NPT as the cornerstone of the non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament regime. As we are soon to embark on a new cycle of review of the Treaty, we must all stand fast to uphold its principles and seek to achieve its objectives. This is more true today than any time before in view of the results of the last review process and both recent regional and international developments that have contributed towards undermining the credibility of the Treaty. It disturbs us that, despite the passing of 39 years since the NPT came into force and despite its indefinite extension, which was intrinsically linked to the decisions and resolution adopted at the 1995 Review Conference, the NPT continues to face extremely dangerous challenges. Its credibility continues to be undermined, not only by those who refuse to join it, but also by its very parties, whether through lack of adherence to its provisions or complacency in striving to achieve its universality.

The CD was created to undertake one task: the framing and conclusion of international treaties, in a multilateral forum, aimed at achieving the goal of disarmament, especially that of nuclear weapons, given the threat which they pose to humanity. We accepted, during the last session of the Conference, a more deliberative approach so as to explore and identify areas of common understanding. We cannot attest that this process has reaped any tangible results. We continue to note, unfortunately, that whether in the CD or in other multilateral disarmament forums, words do not necessarily correspond to deeds, and actions continue to focus on individual interests that prevail over principles. It is thus not surprising that this unfortunate situation has cast its negative shadow on the work and activities of the CD and its future, as well as on the multilateral disarmament agenda in general. The continuation of this state will necessitate a re-evaluation of our position on many issues.

On the other hand, if sincerity and good faith prevail, we are willing and look forward to working diligently with our partners in the CD in order to achieve real, tangible progress leading to concrete results in disarmament, ultimately leading to the complete eradication of all WMDs, primarily nuclear weapons. We will look forward to the strengthening of the international non-proliferation regime through achieving the complete universality of the NPT and faithful compliance with its provisions, while confronting the threats posed by other weapons whose victims continue to fall in the tens of thousands, both combatants and innocent civilians.

Madam President, I wish to conclude by expressing our sincere hope that the current session of the CD is ready to shoulder its responsibilities as the only international multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament, especially with regard to issues of critical importance to the international community. I wish to reiterate that the delegation of Egypt is keen to offer its

(Mr. Meleka, Egypt)

support to all serious efforts exerted on your part with the P-6 to revitalize the work of the CD and extract it from its current predicament so as to achieve the interests of all parties within the context of the agreed-upon references and mandates given to the CD.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Egypt for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now call upon the distinguished representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ambassador Ali Reza Moaiyeri.

Mr. MOAIYERI (Islamic Republic of Iran): Madam President, as this is the first time my delegation is taking the floor under your presidency, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

I take the floor in exercise of my delegation's right of reply to react to the reference made to my country in the course of today's meeting by the distinguished representative of Germany on behalf of the EU, and would like to make the following points.

We have already reiterated that due to the technicalities of Iran's case, we do not believe the CD to be the appropriate body to deal with the issue. Iran has worked closely with the Agency during the course of the last three years to deal with the issues, the questions raised about the peaceful nuclear programme. All the States parties to the NPT, without discrimination, have an inalienable right to produce nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. As this right is inalienable, it cannot be undermined or curtailed under any pretext. Any attempt to do so would be an attempt to undermine a pillar of the NPT and indeed, the Treaty itself. Iran, like any other non-nuclear-weapon State, has no obligation to negotiate and seek agreement for the exercise of its inalienable right, nor can it be obligated to suspend it. However, Iran agreed to suspend its enrichment activities voluntarily, as it preferred a political agreement which could serve positively in the broader political spectrum, and particularly in our troubled and volatile region.

Iran did suspend its enrichment activities exactly for confidence-building. But the question is, how does one measure confidence? There is a limit to confidence-building. Is confidence-building a pretext for depriving Iran of its right under the NPT?

Iran commits itself to its NPT obligations. The Security Council is not the right place to discuss the Iranian nuclear issue. The right place is IAEA.

This has just been an exercise of our right of reply. My delegation will present its national position on the issues related to the work of the Conference in the future.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now call upon the distinguished representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Mr. Choe.

Mr. CHOE (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Madam President, since my delegation is taking the floor for the first time, I would like to congratulate you and the other CD Presidents for this year.

(Mr. Choe, Democratic People's Republic of Korea)

My delegation speaks in exercise of its right of reply to the remarks made by Germany on behalf of the European Union. My delegation regrets very much that the speaker has broken a constructive atmosphere and the surroundings of the CD, whose urgent and priority task is to agree upon as immediately as possible the agenda items and other important issues relating to the successful carrying out of its business for this year. However, since accusations were addressed to the DPRK, it is the duty of the DPRK delegation to respond to them faithfully.

First of all, my delegation would like to state that the missile launch by the DPRK was a fully-fledged exercise of its sovereign rights, and nobody is entitled to criticize it. The DPRK has categorically and resolutely rejected all United Nations Security Council resolutions relating to the DPRK and has made it very clear that it will not be bound by them. The DPRK, in addition to that, is not a party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and therefore will not be bound by it either.

Let me now turn to the nuclear issue. We are very much concerned about the allegation made by Germany on behalf of the European Union, because it has questioned only the position by the DPRK on nuclear weapons, while making no mention of the fundamental causes and the ringleaders that compelled it to do so. Over the last half a century, the DPRK has been subjected to constant manoeuvres of hostility by outside forces aimed at isolating, stifling and imposing sanctions. In particular the current United States administration, immediately after taking office in 2001, called the DPRK a part of the "axis of evil" and a target of the nuclear pre-emptive strike, and has still been looking for every opportunity to invade it by deploying huge military striking forces in the air, sea and land, ready to fire at any time. In a nutshell this indicates quick elimination of the DPRK. The DPRK had no alternative but was driven by such a situation to possess nuclear weapons, just as a positive defensive measure to safeguard itself. If one has no defence capability strong enough to defend itself, it cannot avoid being stateless.

This is the bitter lesson drawn from the past history of the DPRK, as well as the truth shown by the reality of today's world, where the law of the jungle is often prevalent. Our nuclear weapons are not meant to threaten anyone at all. On the contrary, they are serving as a reliable deterrent to protect the supreme security of the State and the life of the people in the face of the threat of nuclear war and the sanctions imposed by the United States, and to prevent a new war and to ensure peace and security on the Korean peninsula.

We have time and again reiterated that we would neither use nuclear weapons first, nor allow any nuclear transfer, and that it would continue to work towards its ultimate objective of the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. Actually, we have done our utmost to make the six-party nuclear negotiations work well, move well. The success of those negotiations depends wholly on the attitude of the United States.

Now the preparations are under way for the next round of the six-party negotiations. In particular, the recent bilateral negotiations between the DPRK and the United States in Berlin were conducted in a positive atmosphere and have led us to some sort of agreement, and that would be useful in moving the six-party negotiations forward in the future.

(Mr. Choe, Democratic People's Republic of Korea)

Under these circumstances, my delegation would like to state that it would not be fair for the European Union to point its fingers at the self-defence actions of the victim, which is the DPRK, while deliberately ignoring the unjust, aggressive actions of the offender. This can be construed as nothing but flattery to a super-Power. It would be another big mistake if they believed that they could shake our will by threatening the DPRK with such accusatory remarks as were made by the representative of the European Union. The DPRK will continue to be uncompromising with any attempts aimed at provoking the DPRK, and will take strong countermeasures accordingly.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the DPRK for his statement. I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Australia, Ambassador Caroline Millar.

Ms. MILLAR (Australia): Madam President, as President of the Seventh Meeting of States Parties to the Mine Ban Convention, I should like to take this opportunity, on the record, to warmly welcome the Indonesian Government's recent ratification of that Convention, as my friend and colleague Ambassador Wibisono has just advised this Conference. As President, Australia has been working actively to promote the universality of the Convention, particularly in the Pacific region. Australia and Indonesia work closely together on a range of regional security issues, so this step taken by the Government of Indonesia will enhance our capacity to do so with respect to mine action.

And Madam President, while I have the floor, I should like to place on the record, too, Australia's deep appreciation for your efforts and those of your presidential colleagues in preparing for the CD's work this year. Your consultations were thorough and undertaken with great integrity, wisdom and sound common sense. It is a pleasure to be working under your guidance. Australia hopes that all delegations will match your efforts with the same steadfast commitment to getting our substantive work under way. We support your proposed organizational framework as a pragmatic and helpful way to proceed. We also support your proposed agenda and Presidential statement.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of Australia for her statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I notice that Germany has asked for the floor. I would urge the delegations concerned to address matters of a bilateral nature outside this body, but nonetheless, you have the floor.

Mr. LUEDEKING (Germany): I am grateful for being given the floor again, and I am sorry for asking for the floor in order to exercise the right of reply of my delegation with regard to the statements which have just been made by the distinguished representatives of Iran and the DPRK.

First, I would like briefly - and I do not want to repeat what I said earlier in the statement on behalf of the EU - to refer quickly to some of the points made by the distinguished Iranian Ambassador. First, I would beg to differ with regard to characterizing the Iran case, as he called it, as a mere technicality not relevant to the work of this Conference. I believe what - and that was one of the primary focuses of my earlier intervention - we are concerned about is the

(Mr.Luedeking, Germany)

integrity and authority of the NPT, and that is exactly what is at stake here, namely that the Iranian nuclear programme and the pursuit of a secret programme over nearly 20 years represents a clear challenge to the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

Secondly, I would concur with the Iranian Ambassador that there is an inalienable right enshrined in the NPT with regard to the use of nuclear energy. Nobody has questioned this right, and indeed, on all the previous occasions, also in the offers and written statements made by the European Union and also by the E3 + 3, this right was unambiguously recognized. However, the NPT also contains a number of obligations, and those should also be observed. The concern was raised by this extended period of non-compliance by the Iranian side with regard to its own obligations under its safeguards agreement with IAEA. This has indeed given rise to serious concerns and suspicions about the Iranian nuclear programme, because the activities which had been concealed referred specifically to the most sensitive parts of the nuclear fuel cycle.

I now believe my third point would be that it is only fair to ask for Iran to re-establish the confidence of the international community in the exclusively peaceful nature of its nuclear activities.

I would also like to avail myself of this opportunity to refer to the wide-ranging offers that the European Union, as well as the E3 + 3, have extended to Iran, an offer which, for example, would open an entirely new chapter in the relationship between the European Union and Iran and would, for example, not only cover cooperation in the nuclear field, in the development of nuclear energy, but also cooperation in other fields, like in the field of technology, economic cooperation and also in the field of political cooperation. These offers have unfortunately been left on the table without Iran reverting to them.

I should also add that it would not help - and does not help - if Iran continues to disregard the requests and requirements of the international community as expressed in the relevant resolutions of the IAEA Board of Governors, as well as the resolutions adopted by the United Nations Security Council. I would also, at this juncture, mention the fact that the lack of cooperation, or the insufficient cooperation, that is being deplored by IAEA with regard to the clarifying of the still open questions does not in any way contribute to building the necessary confidence that is required. Therefore, it seemed appropriate, also in the light of the forthcoming NPT review process, to call on Iran to comply with its obligations.

I should again stress that the European Union is firmly committed to resolving the issue in a diplomatic manner. I, for one, regret it very much that the process that was started, the negotiating process which was started between the EU3 and Iran with the October 2004 Paris agreement, was unilaterally terminated by Iran in the summer of 2005 with the unilateral ending of the suspension commitment. I think it is now up to Iran to establish the necessary prerequisites for resuming negotiations. The European Union stands ready to resume such negotiations. The offer that was being made remains on the table.

(Mr.Luedeking, Germany)

I would also perhaps, as we talk about rights, refer to a point which I think is equally true regarding the case of the DPRK. The resolutions which were adopted by the United Nations Security Council also have established legally binding obligations on Iran as well as on the DPRK, which we expect to be complied with.

Regarding the statement by the distinguished representative of the DPRK, I will not hide my disappointment at that statement because I saw in it a rehearsal of well-known arguments. I particularly deplore the fact that the distinguished representative saw fit to simply reject the validity of United Nations Security Council resolution 1718, which is also binding on the DPRK. The distinguished representative of the DPRK made reference to the fact that the DPRK is not a party to the NPT. I would draw this Conference's attention to the fact that this is a question which is open. We, for one, do not consider the DPRK as having exercised in an effective manner its right to withdrawal pursuant to article X of the NPT. I would also like to add that it is simply unacceptable that a country chooses to pursue a nuclear-weapons programme under the guise of the right enshrined in article IV of the NPT. I believe that the distinguished representative of the DPRK rightly referred to the risks of jungle laws gaining ground. That is exactly why we so persistently call on the DPRK to comply with its obligations under the NPT, and also its obligations in pursuance of the relevant resolutions adopted by the United Nations Security Council.

I have also taken note of the positive assessment that he had of the recent contacts in Berlin between the DPRK and the United States. We also take hope from these contacts, and we hope that the six-party talks will rapidly be resumed and will hopefully quickly result in an agreement which translates the September 2005 statement which was adopted in the six-party talks.

The EU, for one, will make its contribution to this process and is ready, as it has done in the past, to contribute to an acceptable and good solution to the problem.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of Germany, speaking on behalf of the EU, for his statement, and I now call upon China, Ambassador Cheng.

Mr. CHENG (China) (spoke in Chinese): On the issue of the work of the Conference, I would like to take the floor again a little later, to set forth the position of the Chinese delegation. I noticed that, in the statement which we have just heard, the delegation made reference to the issue of the test. I can inform everyone here that, as we are all aware at yesterday's news briefing the spokesman of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs already stated the Chinese position on the issue. Allow me here to reiterate what he said: "Recently China conducted a test in outer space. This test was not aimed at any country and did not pose any threat to any country. China has always stood for the peaceful use of outer space and is opposed to the weaponization of outer space and to an arms race in outer space. China has never participated, nor will it ever participate, in any form of arms race in outer space." This is the main thrust of his statement. I would like to state here that China's position on this matter is very clear. As everyone is aware, China has always called for the negotiation and conclusion by the Conference on Disarmament of an international legal instrument to prevent an arms race in outer space. This is also the common understanding of most Member States of the United Nations.

(Mr. Cheng, China)

A few years back my delegation, together with the Russian delegation, and other concerned delegations submitted possible elements for a treaty on the prevention of the deployment of weapons in outer space and the threat or use of force against outer space objects. It is our hope that the Conference on Disarmament will start substantive work on this matter as soon as possible.

Finally, I would like to voice my personal concern at the kind of statements being made by certain countries and the tone in which those statements are made, which might interfere with the constructive nature of the work of the Conference.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of China for his statement. I now give the floor to the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. Ordzhonikidze.

Mr. ORDZHONIKIDZE (Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations): Like probably many of us sitting here, we are gradually starting to have the feeling that the debate is not going in a positive direction, and that is of concern to myself, as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, so I would like to appeal to all delegations, in particular those who are involved in the, let us say, exchange of views, rights of reply, political discussions, that actually, those political discussions are repetitions of whatever we had in the Security Council debates on these issues.

Since we have relevant Security Council resolutions on the issues, we do not need to concentrate on these political problems too much. I would rather appeal to you to concentrate on our problems, the problems of the Conference on Disarmament which are before the CD and unfortunately, which we are not able to even start solving. I think such an approach will be more conducive to the whole disarmament effort process and will not adversely affect the important political debates and negotiations going on outside this forum.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament for his statement. I have two more speakers, Iran and the DPRK, and I will reiterate the previous request that I urge the delegations concerned to address matters of a bilateral nature outside this body. I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. MOAIYERI (Islamic Republic of Iran): I shall really follow your advice as well as the Secretary-General's. Actually, I had prepared a long answer, to answer by a, b, c: (a) the assumptions of the distinguished German representative; (b) the behaviour that is exerted to Iran internationally; and (c) the context, which I think is very interesting to discuss. I have details of them. But in order to follow your advice, as well as that of our good Secretary-General, I do not respond, but that does not mean that it does not have an answer.

I just have one question, one simple question: who started it? We finish it. I hope we finish it, for the sake of the CD.

The PRESIDENT: I sincerely thank the representative of Iran and now give the floor to the representative of the DPRK.

Mr. CHOE (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Against my will I have to exercise my right of reply, but as the Secretary-General of the CD has just mentioned, I shall be taking into full account what he has said and what Madam President has just mentioned.

I would just like to mention three things. First of all, we are very much disappointed, more and more, by the stereotype accusations that are coming from a certain group of countries, which is always boasting that it is interested in resolving international affairs. I think that my delegation has to advise that group of countries to take into account the fact that everything has its own causes and consequences, so I would advise that the group of countries has to take into account the causes, not only the consequences.

Secondly, on the NPT and the Security Council resolutions: the DPRK position remains exactly the same, and I shall not repeat it again.

Thirdly, we would like to advise that group of countries to be more objective and to refrain from polemics if it is really interested in moving this CD forward.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of the DPRK for his statement. I have no more speakers on my list for today. I actually do have a speaker on my list. It is the distinguished representative of Germany, and I would repeat again: please, if we could deal with bilateral matters outside of this chamber, it would be appreciated. We are running into time constraints in the work of the CD today.

Mr. LUEDEKING (Germany): Madam President, I apologize for taking the floor again, and with your indulgence, very briefly, I just would like to make the point that the issues that I raised in my statement are all directly relevant to the work of this Conference and also relevant to the preparation process for the upcoming NPT review process. I would also like to stress the point that none of the points which I raised is of a bilateral nature, but these are points which are of international concern, and that is why I raised them in this forum. Otherwise, I would never raise any bilateral issues, because that, as you said, is inappropriate.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of Germany, and we take note of his comments. I have no more speakers unless there is a speaker. I recognize the distinguished representative of Iran.

Mr. MOAIYERI (Islamic Republic of Iran): Since the distinguished representative of Germany said it is in relationship to this CD and it is of a multilateral nature, I have to respond. I followed your advice. He repeated. He said that it relates, so if I do not just respond, it means that we are not interested. So, let me be very detailed on each issue that he raised.

First, on the assumptions. I think that in his assumption in his talk there are significant assumptions which need to be deconstructed. One is that Iran had a secret process, a concealment process. It was very secretive, like something about which we did not know anything at all, and

(Mr. Moaiyeri, Islamic Republic of Iran)

now it is still in the same mode. It is not the case. Iran, through cooperation with the Agency, resolved all these issues, step by step, and you can see the record. You can go to the files.

There is another assumption that Iran is somehow against the NPT and its obligations. It is not. Iran is actually one of the founding members of the NPT. Iran is cognizant of the NPT, cognizant of how important the NPT's three pillars are, and is exercising its right under the NPT.

There is another assumption, that if we take into account the details of what is suggested, you say that what Iran is doing is something irregular, abnormal, illegal. It is not the case. Whatever Iran has done is exactly the word and verbatim of the law.

And all these assumptions, latent and implicit, should be deconstructed and rejected.

And now I go to my (b): I think it is very important how you behave with a country, a Member State, Member of the United Nations, and a founding Member of the United Nations. Even if you think that you are offering some incentive, incentives for economic development and so on and so forth. The behaviour that is followed by certain powers towards Iran, not just today, but in a historical context, should be taken into account. I think in this behaviour it is an insult to the Iranian nation. This is why the nuclear issue inside Iran is not a simple issue, just by elites. The Iranian people see it as an historical aspiration. A century ago, certain Western Powers deprived Iran of a railroad and said Iran could not have a railroad. Then they said Iran could not have a steel factory, and they deprived Iran of a steel factory. Now it is on the record. You go to certain countries to the archives. You will find it. Then they said Iran could not have this, could not have that. This type of behaviour, in a historical context, is exactly being repeated, and this is a national issue today. I think that it is the same way that they are behaving towards the CD. The CD is not the place for such a type of what you called, Madam President, bilateral issues.

We are at the beginning of a very important year, but we start by this, and I tried to refrain, but I think if they behave with the pretext of Iran, it is also a reflection of a greater behaviour, where you see the Iranian nation has been treated in a very unreasonable manner, historically and today, and with discrimination. Here there have been several references to Security Council resolutions. You all know that the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein invaded Iran in 1980. The Security Council never, never, never condemned the Iraqi Baath regime. Iran nationalized its oil in the 1950s. The Security Council convened a meeting to declare that the nationalization of Iranian oil was a threat against international peace and security. And the Security Council did not take note of what was said in the Middle East about the possession of nuclear weapons by a State, exactly by one of the leaders, or one of those countries which possess nuclear weapons, exactly in the same week that they discussed Iran for not stopping enrichment. So this type of behaviour is rejected by Iranians.

But now let me go to my (c). (c) is context. You are talking in a global context where all energies are forwarded just for preventing us in the South generally, in the Middle East in particular, and Iran with special attention, to be stopped from not just the nuclear issue, for whatever its right is in that region, and you are talking, you read every day, the threat of military force. It is on the table. We talk about military invasion. All forces are there, psychological

(Mr. Moaiyeri, Islamic Republic of Iran)

welfare. This context should be taken into account, I think, in this context, which is made by certain Powers. Iran is really trying to solve as much as we can. It is very important in this whole discussion.

Saying all that, I still insist, reiterate, that Iran is a member of the NPT. Iran is cognizant of its rights in the NPT, would remain in the NPT framework, and is ready to work in the framework. I hope we take into account what the CD is about, and if you are going to open this, we are ready to continue. I thank you and I hope my question that we have started will still be answered.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of Iran for his statement. There are no more speakers on my list for today.

I now intend to suspend this formal plenary meeting and to invite the Conference to continue the consideration in an informal meeting, which will follow immediately, of the draft agenda for the 2007 session, as contained in CD/WP.545, as well as additional requests received from States not members of the Conference to participate in our work during this session, as contained in document CD/WP.544/Add.1.

This informal meeting is open only to member States and States not members that have been accepted to participate in our work.

This plenary meeting is suspended.

The meeting was suspended at 12.10 p.m. and resumed at 12.25 p.m.

The PRESIDENT: Distinguished delegates, at the informal plenary that we have just concluded, we reached agreement on this year's agenda. Accordingly, may I take it that the Conference adopts for its 2007 session the agenda contained in document CD/WP.545, which was distributed last Monday?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: In connection with the adoption of the agenda, I, as the President of the Conference, should like to state that it is my understanding that if there is consensus in the Conference to deal with any issues, they could be dealt with within this agenda. The Conference will also take into consideration rules 27 and 30 of the rules of procedure of the Conference.

I would like to invite the Conference now to take a decision on the additional requests for participation in our work by States not members of the Conference. These requests are contained in CD/WP.544/Add.1, and were received from the following States, namely, Albania, Georgia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

May I take it that the Conference decides to invite these States to participate in the work of the Conference according to its rules of procedure?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: As you are aware, during our informal meeting that was held in this chamber on Monday, 15 January 2007, I briefed you that the informal consultations that I conducted during the intersessional period from October 2006 until now reflected the fact that no consensus presently exists on a programme of work based on any existing formal or informal proposal to commence negotiations on any one issue, or a combination of issues. You will also recall that I informed you that no principled opposition exists to a vertical delineation of the CD's work or to a more structured framework for deliberations in the Conference. I furthermore stated that no principled opposition exists to the appointment of coordinators for issues of substance under the agenda.

Following the finalization of the aforementioned informal consultations, there is an understanding in the Conference that it agrees to the appointment of coordinators by the 2007 Presidents of the Conference for all items on the agenda and the organizational framework, without prejudice to any future decisions of the Conference on its programme of work. The Conference may review and adjust the organizational framework if deemed necessary.

Under the authority of the 2007 Presidents of the Conference, the coordinators will arrange and chair deliberations dealing with the agenda items in a comprehensive manner without preconditions, bearing in mind all relevant views and proposals, past, present and future. The 2007 Presidents of the Conference will periodically report to the Conference on progress achieved by the coordinators.

In the light of progress achieved, the 2007 Presidents of the Conference will review the assignments of the coordinators, as and when appropriate, taking into consideration all relevant views and proposals and the prospects for future work.

In accordance with the above, I am pleased to announce that the 2007 Presidents of the Conference on Disarmament appoint the following persons as coordinators, namely:

- Ambassador Wegger Strømme of Norway for agenda item 1, entitled "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament";
- Ambassador Carlo Trezza of Italy for agenda item 2, entitled "Prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters";
- Ambassador Paul Meyer of Canada for agenda item 3, entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space";
- Ambassador Carlos Paranhos of Brazil for agenda item 4, entitled "Effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons";
- Ambassador Petko Draganov of Bulgaria for agenda item 5, entitled "New types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons; radiological weapons";

(The President)

- Ambassador Makarim Wibisono of Indonesia for agenda item 6, entitled “Comprehensive programme of disarmament”;
- Ambassador John Duncan of the United Kingdom for agenda item 7, entitled “Transparency in armaments”.

The aforementioned coordinators will report the outcome of the discussions on the relevant agenda items to the 2007 CD Presidents, who, in conjunction with each of the coordinators, will finalize the report on the progress achieved on each of the agenda items. Following informal consultations with the CD membership, the incumbent President will present the report to the CD plenary. The outcome of the evaluation process will determine the planning of activities during the subsequent period, including the level of intensity of work for the various coordinators.

Regarding the forthcoming meetings of the Conference, I have requested the secretariat to circulate an organizational framework that contains information about our future meetings. It will be entitled CONF/2007/CRP.1. In this regard, you are requested to please note that more specific details regarding the various informal meetings will be forthcoming from the coordinators in the very near future in order to assist delegations in their planning for the meetings.

In reaching the above understandings, I wish to thank all delegations for their flexibility and constructive contributions that have made the P-6 initiative a reality.

Is there any delegation that wishes to take the floor on this or any other issue? I give the floor to the distinguished representative of China, Ambassador Cheng.

Mr. CHENG (China) (spoke in Chinese): Madam President, at the outset, my delegation would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament for the first part of the 2007 session. We believe that, under your able guidance, the Conference will be able to make a very good start. The Chinese delegation will make every endeavour to support you in your work. We would also like to express our appreciation for the efforts currently being made by the group of six former Presidents of the Conference to move its work forward.

Last year, the Conference on Disarmament displayed a strong sense of innovation in the activities which it organized. Constructive discussions were held on all agenda items and these discussions undoubtedly played a positive role in promoting the Conference’s work.

There is a Chinese saying which goes: “Constant review makes constant renewal”. This means that, if we constantly draw lessons from the past, we will stand to gain more in the future. In our view, the smooth conduct of discussions in the Conference on Disarmament last year was attributable to the fact that, as noted by the former United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, we all made particular efforts to reflect the security concerns of all member States.

(Mr. Cheng, China)

Madam President, we welcome the introductory outline which you have just given of the work of the Conference for this year's session. Here I would like to recall the remarks by the Ambassador of Poland, Mr. Rapacki, when introducing last year's initiative by the six former Presidents, who pointed out that the aim of the initiative was to bring us closer to achieving consensus on the programme of work. The Chinese delegation believes that this year's arrangement is based on the same consideration.

In this connection, I would like to refer to the message of hope addressed to the Conference on Disarmament by the new United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon. In his message, Mr. Ban stressed the importance of nuclear disarmament, and looked to the Conference on Disarmament to lead progress on all those fronts. My delegation fully shares his expectations.

In the statement which you made a short while ago, you also outlined the functions of the coordinators. We would like to extend our appreciation to those Ambassadors who have taken on the heavy responsibility, as coordinators, of chairing discussions on the respective agenda items. We hope that, under the chairmanship of the six former Presidents and with the assistance of each of the coordinators, the member States will be able to reach a conclusion on how to carry forward the work of the Conference.

Recently I came across an article in the Western media in which the author recounted the following story. A Hollywood mogul was negotiating with Bernard Shaw to buy the film rights of one of his plays. After protracted bargaining Mr. Shaw told the studio boss that there could be no deal between them. "The trouble is, Mr. Goldwyn", he said, "you are interested only in art and I am interested only in money".

I'm not sure whether or not they struck any deal in the end; nevertheless I consider that the story is very instructive for our work here in the Conference on Disarmament. The progress of the Conference depends on the combined efforts of us all: in other words, in order to move our work forward in the Conference on Disarmament, all member States should demonstrate flexibility and should give due consideration to the concerns of others. Only in this way will we be able to narrow the differences between us and finally break the deadlock on the programme of work. It is China's sincere hope that the discussions on which we are now embarking, building on the efforts which we made last year, will help bring us closer to attaining this goal at an early date.

The Chinese delegation stands ready to continue working with all other parties with a view to reaching agreement on the commencement at the earliest possible stage of substantive work on all relevant agenda items.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of China for his comments. I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Algeria.

Mr. KHELIF (Algeria) (spoke in Arabic): At the outset, I should like to congratulate the Conference on the adoption of the agenda and to congratulate you, Madam President, and the group of Presidents for all the efforts that you made during the previous phase, enabling us to adopt the agenda, and for your initiative on our work for 2007.

Madam President, I have a number of comments on your proposal and I should like these to be included in the official records of the meeting.

From what we understood of the informal consultations on your proposal for the organization of work, the appointment of the special coordinators is an initiative of the Presidents. The coordinators will work under the authority of the Presidents, and, as the delegation of Algeria understands it, will therefore facilitate our work. We did not object to this initiative; rather, we encouraged it. However, according to line 2, paragraph 2, of your statement, and I shall read it out in English:

(Spoke in English)

“There is an understanding in the Conference that it agrees to the appointment of coordinators by the 2007 Presidents.”

(Spoke in Arabic)

We understand it to be a decision of the Conference. I should like to stress that the Algerian delegation does not object to, indeed it encourages, this initiative. However, we do not regard the appointment of the special coordinators as a decision of the Conference.

As for the decisions or resolutions that will be presented on the progress made by the Conference, as we understand it, these decisions or resolutions reflect the views of the Presidents or rapporteurs on how the work has progressed, but will not be decisions or resolutions of the Conference.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Algeria for his comments, and just for clarification, these are not Special Coordinators, and they are appointed under the prerogative of the President.

I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Norway.

Mr. STRØMMEN (Norway): I thought it might be useful, since I go first, to say something how I plan to go about item 1, but maybe later, after the discussion.

The PRESIDENT: I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. ALI (Syrian Arab Republic) (spoke in Arabic): Since this is the first time that my delegation has taken the floor in a formal plenary, I should like to congratulate you, Madam President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference and to express my gratitude

(Mr. Ali, Syrian Arab Republic)

and appreciation for the great efforts that you have been making over the past months. As a member of the group of six Presidents, I am well aware of the scale and quantity of the efforts that you have made.

I should also like to congratulate the Conference on adopting the agenda relatively quickly. As we have said at previous plenary meetings, this agenda addresses the priorities of international peace and security. In our view, there is no greater threat to international peace and security than the very existence of nuclear weapons and the threat that these weapons might be used.

Each delegation has its own priorities, but if we want to make progress in our work, we must give priority to the threats confronting international peace and security in general. On that basis, we look forward to the question of nuclear disarmament receiving the attention of this Conference and of delegations. We also look forward to a discussion, under item 1 of the agenda, of the question of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, a region subjected to a foreign occupation which has inflicted suffering on the inhabitants for decades.

With regard to item 2 of the agenda, on the prevention of nuclear war, over the years only one sub-item has been addressed, namely, prohibition of the production of fissile material. We believe that the time has come for this item to receive the attention that it deserves, in keeping with its true purpose. Here, I call upon the delegations to think hard and make a serious effort to discuss a treaty prohibiting the use of nuclear weapons. Under item 2, we look forward to a treaty prohibiting the use of nuclear weapons. Later on in our statement we shall state our position on the other items and the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

Allow me to return briefly to what happened this morning. We regard what happened as discouraging. We hope that all delegations will act in a credible manner and will address issues objectively, whether they are bilateral or international issues.

We were surprised that a question was raised today about a country that has always respected international law, has never attacked another country, has never occupied foreign territory and has always affirmed its commitment to international law and to the peaceful nature of its nuclear programmes. At the same time another very important question was ignored about a country that is occupying the territory of others, engaging in violence and terrorism, launching successive wars, violating resolutions endowed with international legitimacy, and flouting tens of resolutions adopted by the Security Council, the General Assembly and other international organizations.

The Prime Minister of this State announced, a few weeks ago that the country possesses nuclear weapons; regrettably, no one has addressed this serious matter. We call upon delegations to act credibly and deal with questions in an objective manner. This is the only way for the Conference to make progress in its work. I hope that we are going to learn the lessons of history, although an American historian has said that the only lesson we learn from history is that we do not learn from history. We hope that we will learn from history and are convinced that progress is not possible while the real security concerns of States and the world at large are ignored.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of the Syrian Arab Republic for his comments, and I now call on the distinguished representative of India, Ambassador Prasad.

Mr. PRASAD (India): Madam President, since this is the first time I am speaking in a formal capacity, I would like to warmly felicitate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference. We are most happy to see you in the Chair and assure you of our fullest support. I would also like to compliment you on the successful steering of the consultation process so far and accomplishing quick agreement on the agenda of the Conference. You have given us a working plan for the schedule of our meetings, for which we thank you. We are glad also that moments ago, in response to the intervention made by the distinguished representative of Algeria, you clarified that the announcement of the appointment of the coordinators is being made within the prerogative of the presidency, and that their role is distinct from the Special Coordinators that the Conference had in the past, who had a clearly defined mandate from the Conference and were appointed under the authority of the Conference. We look forward to working with all the seven coordinators, and compliment them on this appointment.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of India, and I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Morocco.

Mr. BENJABER (Morocco) (spoke in Arabic): Madam President, since this is the first time that I have taken the floor under your presidency, allow me to begin by congratulating you on your assumption of this important position and congratulating the six Presidents for the 2007 session. I should also like to pay tribute to you for the very professional manner in which you conducted deliberations with delegations throughout the previous phase and to wish you every success during this year.

To a great extent, what I have to say is similar to the statements by the delegations of Algeria and India on the appointment of the coordinators. As you know, we expressed our views on this matter during the bilateral consultations. Morocco welcomes this idea, because the coordinators work under the authority of the President and their appointment is one of the prerogatives of the six Presidents. They are not appointed directly by the Conference. Therefore, I believe that the wording of paragraph 2 of your statement may have created some misgivings among some delegations, since you speak in it about the Conference's approval for appointment of these coordinators. However, I think things have now been cleared up, in your response to the distinguished representative of Algeria and the distinguished representative of India. Nevertheless, we wanted to underline our delegation's position that the Presidents should remain the only official point of contact between the six Presidents and the Conference, while the coordinators work unofficially under the authority of the six Presidents. Thank you again for the wide-ranging consultations, and we wish you every success.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of Morocco for his comments, and perhaps will just reiterate the specific elements within my statement, referring to the appointment of the coordinators by the 2007 Presidents and under the authority of the Presidents

(The President)

and that the Presidents of the Conference will report back to the Conference on the progress made. I do believe that we are trying to be as clear as possible, but wherever there is a question, do not hesitate. We will provide the necessary clarification, as needed.

I would now also like to give the floor to the distinguished representative of Iran.

Mr. MOAIYERI (Islamic Republic of Iran): Madam President, I would also like to agree with what the other distinguished delegations before me mentioned about the relationship between the coordinators and the presidency, and I am happy you clarified it.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of Iran for his comments. Are there any other requests for the floor? There was a request from the Ambassador of Norway. He specifically indicated that he would have liked to give you some information ahead of time. However, in my statement, I have also indicated that the coordinators will, in the very near future, provide you with more information, and I would suggest, taking into account the limitation on time, that we perhaps request Ambassador Strømme if we could perhaps postpone the information that he would have preferred to give until the next plenary. If he is willing to accept that, and if there are no other speakers - and it seems to me that there are none - I will indicate that this concludes our business for today.

I would like to inform you that our next plenary meeting will be held on Tuesday, 30 January 2007, at 10 a.m. in this Council chamber.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.