
Conference on Disarmament

20 August 2009

English

Final record of the one thousand one hundred and fifty-third plenary meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Thursday, 20 August 2009, at 10.20 a.m.

President: Ms. Caroline Millar.....(Australia)

The President: I declare open the 1153rd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Before turning to our business today, I would like to extend a very warm welcome to our new colleague, Ambassador Van Den IJssel of the Netherlands, who will represent his country in the Conference. I take this opportunity to assure him of our fullest cooperation and support in the assumption of his duties.

I have the following speakers for today's plenary meeting: the Netherlands, Morocco, Colombia, Brazil, Mexico, the United States and France. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of the Netherlands.

Mr. Van Den IJssel (Netherlands): Madam President, thank you for your warm words of welcome. Since I am taking the floor for the first time as Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the Conference on Disarmament, I hope you will allow me to make some personal remarks.

I consider it a privilege and an honour to be here with so many distinguished and experienced diplomats. It is also an honour to represent my country in this forum, succeeding the successful and well-respected colleagues who represented the Netherlands in the past.

I have come to Geneva, to the Conference on Disarmament, with hope, optimism and high ambitions. Hope that after years of stagnation, the Conference will attend once more to its core business: negotiating and deliberating on substantive issues of multilateral disarmament. Optimism that the Conference on Disarmament, having adopted the programme of work on 29 May, will live up to its role as the world's only multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament. Hope and optimism that the Conference on Disarmament will grasp the opportunities created by the current global momentum for multilateralism, and for multilateral disarmament in particular. A momentum, I think, that we cannot afford to neglect. Repeating the words of my Foreign Minister, Minister Verhagen, in his statement in this Conference on 4 March 2008: we cannot allow the Conference to remain in limbo; let us get to work.

Despite your impressive personal efforts, Madam President, we have not yet been able to reach consensus on how to implement the programme of work we adopted on 29 May. This has not diminished my hope and optimism, or lowered my high ambitions. I think we should continue and redouble our efforts to translate that programme into meaningful action at the earliest possible date. I can assure you and your successor as Conference President, Ambassador Christian Strohal, that the Dutch delegation stands ready to assist you in your endeavours to have the Conference take up the tasks for which it was established.

We are convinced that the programme of work adopted on 29 May points the right way forward and addresses the issues we should be dealing with. We believe that an early start and conclusion of negotiations on an FMCT would be of immense importance as a contribution to both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, goals that we all subscribe to.

The idea of an FMCT is not a new one. I think the first proposal for an international agreement on fissile material dates back 30 years. So I think it is fair to say that the idea has had time to mature. I think it is time to make it a reality.

I spoke earlier of my high ambitions. Over the years the Netherlands has tried to play an active and constructive role in the field of multilateral disarmament. We are the host country to the OPCW. It was a Dutch Ambassador who presided over the CTBT negotiations, the last real negotiations that took place here at the CD. We also chaired the

negotiations that led to Protocol V of the CCW. I think these examples demonstrate that we are willing to take responsibility and to follow our words up with deeds.

I have come to Geneva with the ambition to continue in this tradition and this spirit of constructive activism.

Now that you have come to the end of your term as President, I would like to thank you wholeheartedly for your efforts and those of the P-6 to guide the Conference and to put us back on track. I am confident that your able successor, Ambassador Strohal, will be able to build on the work you have done. As I said before, he can count on our full support.

I look forward to working closely with him, with the other members of the P-6, with the Secretary-General and his staff, and with all the delegations here in this room so that we can make real progress in this very important field of multilateral disarmament.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of the Netherlands for his statement. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Morocco.

Mr. Hilale (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): Madam President, I would like to convey to you the pleasure of my delegation at seeing you preside over the Conference on Disarmament and to congratulate you on your diplomatic skill and your inclusive approach in conducting consultations for the implementation of the programme of work adopted on 29 May. Rest assured of the support and full cooperation of my delegation. The leading role played by your country, Australia, in issues of disarmament in general and nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in particular is internationally recognized.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish a warm welcome to our colleague, the new Ambassador of the Netherlands, Paul Van Den IJssel, and assure him of the full and total cooperation of my delegation.

This year we are celebrating the thirtieth anniversary of the establishment of the Conference on Disarmament. Succeeding the Committee on Disarmament in 1979, in the middle of the cold war, the Conference on Disarmament as well as its 40 members were entrusted by the General Assembly, under the Decalogue, with the task of negotiating and drafting international instruments in the field of disarmament.

The priority during the cold war was to break the spiral of the nuclear arms race and the proliferation of such weapons, as well as to prohibit chemical and biological weapons. The Conference on Disarmament's great success was the adoption of the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons on 30 November 1992 after 10 years of laborious negotiations.

Since then the Conference on Disarmament has not been able to implement its negotiating mandate, which has favoured the emergence of a large number of international initiatives aimed at providing practical responses to the new challenges facing the international community. The Conference on Disarmament was marginalized and became a debating body.

It was in this international context of a voiceless conference that the Proliferation Security Initiative was launched by 15 countries in May 2003 as a collective and multilateral effort to stop and prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Morocco joined it in 2007.

In the wake of this, agreements were concluded outside the Conference on Disarmament, including the Wassenaar arrangement, which added to the arsenal of restrictions and checks on exports of what is known as dual-use fissile material. Humanitarian considerations have also gained in importance on the international agenda, and processes such as the Ottawa and Oslo processes have led to the adoption of legally

binding instruments outside the United Nations system and outside the Conference on Disarmament.

On 29 May, after 13 years of deadlock, the Conference on Disarmament finally adopted document CD/1863 setting forth the Conference's programme of work. That gave rise to the hope of seeing the Conference on Disarmament recover its true vocation as a multilateral negotiating body. Although CD/1863 provides for negotiations only on the fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT), none of its provisions prevents the other working groups from beginning negotiations on nuclear disarmament, the prohibition of the militarization of space or negative security assurances.

The whole world shares the conviction that nuclear weapons must never again be used because of their indiscriminate effects, their impact on the environment and their profound implications for regional and global security.

In this context, the Kingdom of Morocco remains convinced that nuclear disarmament is a strategic priority. A legally binding non-discriminatory treaty prohibiting in a verifiable manner the production of fissile material for military purposes and providing for the reconversion of existing stockpiles could constitute a crucial stage on the long road towards total and complete nuclear disarmament. The other stages being, of course, an international instrument assuring the non-nuclear States of the non-use of nuclear weapons against them as well as a treaty on the prevention of the militarization of outer space.

That demand is strengthened by the momentum created by initiatives and declarations in the area of nuclear disarmament, such as the intention of the new American Administration to make efforts to revitalize negotiations on a verifiable FMCT. In this context, we welcome with great satisfaction Washington's new world view in the area of disarmament as set out in the seminal speech made by President Barack Obama in Prague on 5 April. The statement by Mrs. Rose Gottemoeller, the Assistant Secretary of State for Arms Control and Security, on 4 June before our Conference that a verifiable FMCT is an essential element in the American vision of a world free of nuclear weapons has come at just the right time to give the Conference on Disarmament new momentum.

In addition, the plan announced by British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, the initiative of French President Nicolas Sarkozy, the discussions between the United States and Russia on the Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms Weapons (START 1) and the declaration by Russia and China that these two countries will begin negotiations on a treaty to prevent the placement of weapons in space are all strong and positive signals to lend new dynamism to the work of our Conference. The Conference is called on to find in them the political will and the commitment displayed by all these nuclear Powers so as to begin serious negotiations on the various topics on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament.

The Kingdom of Morocco welcomes the positive climate which prevailed during the work of the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 Conference to Review the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the adoption of the agenda of the Review Conference. It expresses the hope that the member States will display the necessary political will in order to ensure the success of the 2010 Review Conference and relaunch the NPT, the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime.

The international community, and particularly the nuclear Powers, are called on to implement the decision of the 1995 NPT Review Conference for the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. That decision was one of the essential elements which strengthened the universality of the NPT thanks to the support of the Arab countries of the region. It is also important that all nuclear installations in the countries of the Middle East region, without any exception, should be subject to the IAEA safeguards system. The creation of the nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East remains an important stage for

the establishment of trust and an essential element for an end to the nuclear arms race and the establishment of peace and security in the Middle East region and around the world.

This month of August coincides with the thirteenth anniversary of the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty by the United Nations General Assembly. However, its entry into force remains blocked because nine countries listed in annex II have not yet ratified this instrument in accordance with article 14, while the monitoring system has practically been completed. The Kingdom of Morocco therefore launches an appeal to all countries to participate in the collective effort to strengthen the non-proliferation regime and complete the entry into force of the Treaty. In this regard we welcome the intention of the United States Administration to ratify the CTBT. This decision would create a new momentum for its entry into force. My country is actively involved in promoting the universality of the CTBT, and it is in that framework that it jointly chairs the Article XIV Conference together with France, thus actively shouldering its share of international responsibility.

The objective of nuclear disarmament also involves the establishment of an international treaty on negative security assurances. Unilateral statements by nuclear States that they will not use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear States and will apply the principle of non-first use are insufficient because they can be reversed and are no more than declaratory undertakings. Thus, only a legally binding instrument on negative security assurances can prevent nuclear proliferation and enhance the security of our planet.

In addition, prevention of the arms race in outer space remains at the top of the agenda of the international community, and thus among the priorities of the Conference on Disarmament. Outer space should remain a common heritage of mankind and should be used exclusively for peaceful purposes, as stipulated in many United Nations General Assembly resolutions. The initiatives put forward in this regard could serve as a basis for the opening of negotiations on a long-awaited instrument on the demilitarization of outer space.

The Kingdom of Morocco's commitment on disarmament issues has been a strategic choice since independence. The Kingdom of Morocco has always been firmly devoted to peace, security and the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes. As a State party to almost all international disarmament instruments, the Kingdom of Morocco has spared no effort to plead and work in favour of the cause of disarmament, the only guarantee for the durable and lasting maintenance of peace and security and prevention of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

In this context, the Kingdom of Morocco hosted the first meeting of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism launched by Presidents Bush and Putin on 15 June 2006 in St. Petersburg at the G-8 Summit. From 13 founding members in Rabat in October 2006, this initiative now includes more than 90 members. In this framework, Morocco hosted in Rabat from 5 to 7 February 2008 an international seminar on emergency response in cases of malicious acts involving the use of radioactive substances. This seminar was intended to foster awareness among partner nations of the importance of planning and preparing emergency responses to malicious acts of this kind. The seminar concluded that it was important to strengthen national capabilities and to encourage nations to review their response capacities, in particular through international cooperation. The seminar also stressed the importance of exchanging information in order to prevent malicious acts committed by terrorists.

The second seminar on the prevention of illicit trafficking in nuclear and radioactive materials was also organized in Rabat from 3 to 5 June 2009 in order to examine trends and experience in the area of illicit trafficking in the nuclear and radiological fields, explore ways and means of strengthening international efforts and cooperation among partner States

to ensure a more effective struggle against such trafficking and share best practice in the area of prevention, detection and response to illicit trafficking in these materials by terrorists. The seminar brought together some 60 professionals, technical experts and regulators from 24 partner countries working in the areas of security, customs and information.

In that same framework, Morocco proposed in particular the organization of an awareness creation workshop for the West African countries during the second half of 2009 in the framework of the implementation of the plan of action under the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism.

On 19 and 20 November 2008, the Kingdom of Morocco also organized in Rabat, together with the United Nations, a seminar on promotion of the universality of the Convention on Conventional Weapons and its protocols. The seminar, intended for States non-parties to this Convention in the Middle East and Mediterranean region, was intended to present the Convention and its protocols as well as measures for implementation and the inherent advantages of acceding to the Convention.

At the national level and as part of measures taken by the Kingdom of Morocco to apply the Convention on Biological Weapons, a national seminar on biodiversity and biosafety was organized in cooperation with the Department of State of the United States of America for 12 ministerial departments with an interest in this topic. An international conference on the same subject was organized in Casablanca on 3 and 4 April 2009.

As a transparency measure the Kingdom of Morocco regularly submits reports in accordance with resolution 1540 in relation to the Convention on Chemical Weapons, the Convention on Biological Weapons or the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its Protocol II. Although it is not a party to the Ottawa Convention, Morocco voluntarily and regularly submits its report in the context of transparency measures under article 7 of the Convention.

My delegation shares with all the members of the Conference on Disarmament the hope that our Conference will resume its work actively and restore multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament to their proper place in the programme of the international community.

It is therefore important to overcome the present deadlock which is affecting the implementation of the work programme and to work, in strict compliance with the rules of procedure, for the immediate adoption of document CD/1870/Rev.1 submitted by our President, the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Australia, Ms. Caroline Millar, on 6 August 2009. We believe that this document meets the criteria established by the members of the Conference in terms of geographical distribution among the chairmen of the working groups and the special coordinators and in terms of allocation of time among the various agenda items. In this regard we commend the tireless efforts which you are making, Madam President, to identify ways and means of enabling your document CD/1870/Rev.1 to be adopted by all the members of the Conference.

Furthermore, my delegation would like to reaffirm that the rule of consensus, the cornerstone of the rules of procedure of our Conference, must be scrupulously complied with. Our Conference has survived the cold war and has gone through the changes which have affected the international scene in the last 20 years, while preserving its relevance and the centrality of its role as a multilateral negotiating body in the area of nuclear disarmament. This has been thanks to respect for its rules. Accepting any violation of that sacrosanct principle could endanger the very mandate of our Conference.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Morocco for his very detailed and informative statement setting out, among other things, Morocco's own efforts on a wide

range of disarmament issues. I also welcome his support to implement CD/1864 through the draft decision we presented at this Conference last week.

I now give the floor to the representative of Colombia.

Mr. Avila Camacho (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all we wish to welcome the Ambassador of the Netherlands to this forum and assure him that he can count on the friendship and cooperation of this delegation.

Madam President, the delegation of Colombia wishes to acknowledge your professionalism and dedication and to thank you for all the impressive efforts that you and your delegation have made during your presidency in order to make significant progress in the Conference on Disarmament, with the support of the platform of the Presidents. I take this opportunity to express our full support for the next presidency of the Conference, the delegation of Austria. As we have affirmed throughout the year, the only interest this delegation has in this forum is that of initiating substantive work on issues of disarmament and international security as early as possible. We cannot remain in the current situation in which we find ourselves; we must move forward.

As you know, Cartagena de Indias, located on the Caribbean coast of Colombia, will be the venue for the Second Review Conference of the States parties to the Convention on Anti-Personnel Mines. The Cartagena Summit will be held from 30 November to 4 December next, and will be chaired by Ambassador Susan Eckey of Norway.

The date is getting closer, and for this reason we have launched the official web page of the event, www.cartagenasummit.gov.co, which contains information related to this important international event. We are currently continuing to make technical adjustments to improve it, but it is already available. The only registration procedure is available on that page, and we invite everyone to visit it and begin this process of registration as early as possible. Both this delegation and the support unit for the implementation of the Convention and the United Nations Department of Disarmament Affairs will be alert to any concern or request that may arise in this connection or on any other subject of the meeting.

Finally, I wish to announce that the Vice-President of the Republic of Colombia, Francisco Santos Calderón, will be present at the inaugural session of the second Cartagena preparatory meeting, to be held on 3 and 4 September next here in Geneva in the Palais des Nations, in order to reiterate at the highest level Colombia's unswerving commitment to the Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-Personnel Mines. We therefore hope that you will all be present both in September and in Cartagena, at the highest possible level.

The President: I thank the representative of Colombia for his statement and for the advice provided on the Mine Ban Convention Review Conference in Cartagena. I am sure many of us are looking forward to it. I will certainly be there myself.

I would now like to give the floor to the Ambassador of Brazil.

Mr. Macedo Soares (Brazil): Madam President, the delegation of Brazil wishes to express its high appreciation for the manner in which you have been conducting the Conference on Disarmament in the course of these last weeks.

The achievement of concrete results by means of the adoption of decisions or agreements is not the only way to attest to the success of a presidency. The action of a high-office bearer may also be gauged from firmness of direction combined with observance of the agreed rules, which are meant to protect the rights of every one of the States members. With intelligence, knowledge, perseverance and graciousness, you have fulfilled these requirements, and we thank you for that.

There remains the fact that we have not been able to adopt a decision so far allowing the implementation of the programme of work contained in document CD/1864, adopted by consensus on 29 March.

My interpretation of that fact is that not all member States are ready to accept a decision on implementation unless it includes a number of precautions that, in the view of many, could put the Conference on Disarmament in a straitjacket and severely limit the prospects of it making progress.

I use the word “progress” to indicate the possibility for the Conference to achieve its objective, that is to say, to negotiate legal instruments on disarmament.

The programme of work was adopted as the result not only of great effort but also of a spirit of compromise. Moreover, that decision reflected a change in international relations; otherwise, exertion and goodwill alone would not have sufficed.

This change in international relations stems from a complex combination of events and of actions and statements by political leaders. The Conference on Disarmament must correspond to the overall political atmosphere since it deals with problems that are critical for all States and for every person.

We have a collective responsibility, and by this I mean that we cannot simply acknowledge that one or more States have difficulties, relax and put the blame on them. Collective responsibility means that we all, including primarily those who have difficulties, must work to understand and equate those problems.

It is not a question of safeguarding the relevance of the Conference on Disarmament, since it is — and, unless a different decision is taken at a higher level, will remain — the multilateral organ invested with competence in this field.

The purpose of my intervening, besides praising your performance, is to remind us that we are entrusted with a task which, in spite of a long delay, remains urgent and of vital seriousness.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Brazil for his statement. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Mexico.

Ms. Gómez Oliver (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me before beginning my statement to extend a very warm welcome to Ambassador Paul Van Den IJssel of the Netherlands to Geneva and this Conference. You can count upon the support and friendship of the delegation of Mexico in carrying out your duties, Mr. Ambassador.

Madam President, I wish to express the gratitude of my delegation for the great professionalism, commitment and dedication with which you have led the work of this Conference. Mexico particularly appreciates the efforts you have made to ensure that this forum can shortly begin substantive work which will contribute significantly to international peace and security.

I also acknowledge the efforts made by the other Ambassadors who are members of the P-6 platform in this year 2009. Like you, Madam President, each of them individually and through joint work has made his or her invaluable contribution to building the path we have traced out over these past months, in which, apart from the important fact of adopting the work programme, we have secured clear expressions of support for its early implementation from 64 member States.

We consider that the consensus embodied in the programme adopted by this Conference on 29 May last reflects a careful balance of interests and concerns of the 65 member States of this forum. It also reflects the flexibility shown by all in having made

concessions concerning our ideas and views about the way in which we think the themes this Conference should address should be reflected and channelled.

We all agree in one way or another with the idea of striving finally to build the necessary consensus which will enable this Conference to make a significant contribution in each of the themes on our work programme, reflected in specific steps towards our joint objective of creating a world free of nuclear weapons.

The facts facing us today are most unfortunate. Whereas in other latitudes and in other forums we enthusiastically note encouraging signs and new perspectives for moving firmly forward towards a safer world, in this room, in a manner inconsistent with the consensus we achieved last May, we are faced with the impossibility of adopting a merely procedural decision.

Mexico is not in any way sidestepping the national security concerns and interests of States, and it is to be hoped that once we have begun our substantive discussions, these concerns and these interests will permeate the debate and will be present when defining the possible future results that can be achieved by the Conference in dealing with each of the issues.

Nevertheless, the fact that the Conference cannot achieve consensus on procedural issues, which in turn prevents us from beginning our substantive work, is deplorable from all points of view, irrespective of the sensitivity that each of us may have about the security concerns and interests of each and every one of the States represented here.

It is therefore clear to us that we will still have to work intensively on creating consensus. For this purpose it will be essential for political will and sufficient flexibility on the part of all States to prevail, if in fact we wish to make progress towards that which we all share as our common objective, in other words a world free of nuclear weapons, which will undoubtedly mean strengthening peace and security for all.

Our priority is and must be that of ensuring that this Conference on Disarmament takes up again the noteworthy role it should have in the context of the new negotiating prospects that may be observed in this area. Let us not allow it to become hostage to procedural issues and rules. It would be unfortunate for this forum to lag behind in the developments we quite sincerely hope will soon bear fruit in the field of disarmament. It would be even worse if the fact that it were impossible to make progress in this forum were to be reflected in obstacles in other forums in which we hope to be able to make a decisive contribution to strengthening the disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

We have not lost hope that very shortly conditions will prevail to restore to this Conference the role that it should be playing in multilateral disarmament negotiations. Mexico reaffirms its full readiness to provide all necessary support to the P-6, and in particular your presidency, Madam, and that of your successor, the Ambassador of Austria, Christian Strohal, in order that the consultations which are continuing result in an early solution to the situation we are facing. We are convinced that there is still time to restore the credibility of this Conference and even to enhance it.

I conclude my statement by referring to a highly cheering and encouraging fact. Among the very positive developments that can be noted in the international community in relation to disarmament, my delegation wishes to highlight, and therefore express its gratitude to the countries of the African continent, the entry into force on 15 July last of the Treaty of Pelindaba, establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa, making the entire southern hemisphere free of these weapons. I invite other States to endorse this acknowledgement, with which Africa is undoubtedly manifesting its commitment to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Mexico for her statement. I now give the floor to the representative of the United States.

Mr. Larson (United States of America): Madam President, I wish to begin by welcoming the Ambassador of the Netherlands, and by thanking you, your delegation and the collective P-6 presidency for your unceasing efforts to bring the promise of CD/1864, our consensus programme of work for 2009, to fruition. As we committed at the commencement of your presidency, my delegation has given its full support to those efforts, and we share your disappointment, and the disappointment of nearly all in this chamber, that we have yet to begin the negotiations and substantive discussions set out so clearly in CD/1864.

As President Obama stated clearly in Prague on 5 April, the United States is committed to “seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons”. He went on to say that the first step to stopping the spread of these weapons is a “new treaty that verifiably ends the production of fissile materials intended for use in ... nuclear weapons”. As you know, the inclusion of a verification provision represents a major evolution in United States policy, made in the spirit of pursuing our mutual goals through negotiation and focused discussion. We, the members of the Conference on Disarmament, agreed to take up that task on 29 May, and the global community gave a sigh of relief that the Conference on Disarmament was, at long last, back at work. It is, then, profoundly disappointing that nearly three months later, we have yet to accomplish the simple, straightforward procedural task of agreeing on a schedule of work.

We understand and expect that serious national security concerns will be fully addressed in our negotiations on an FMCT and in our substantive discussions on other issues, as set out in our programme of work. That is the venue for doing so, and that is at the core of the principle of consensus. Make no mistake, however – what we have seen in the past few weeks in the Conference on Disarmament is procedural fault-finding that has cost valuable time and has thwarted the stated goals and aspirations of the international community to pursue in this multilateral forum the central questions of nuclear proliferation, arms control and disarmament. For years in this chamber, we heard the protests of those seeking progress on these issues; we heard the frustrations of those seeking a role for the Conference on Disarmament; and we argued over balance in the programme of work. Those issues were settled in CD/1864. We therefore are left wondering as to the motivations of those who have blocked agreement since we reconvened in early August.

We know that the negotiations and substantive discussions ahead of us will be hard, complex and prolonged, and we will need to be open to listening and responding to all points of view put forward in these discussions. But the magnitude of the challenge should not deter us from getting on with our work with genuine commitment and engagement. It is time for all of us in this chamber, without exception, to again demonstrate that we have the determination to make our efforts concrete and credible and to make the Conference on Disarmament a viable instrument for progress. The international community is watching and will draw the correct conclusions as to whether the Conference on Disarmament is to regain its relevance and stature as the world’s sole multilateral negotiating forum or revert to inertia and the failed patterns of the past. The choice is one that we can only make together.

The President: I thank the representative of the United States for his statement, and I now give the floor to the representative of France.

Ms. Moal-Makame (France) (*spoke in French*): Allow me first of all to wish a warm welcome to the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands, Ambassador Paul Van Den IJssel.

Almost three months after the adoption by the Conference on Disarmament of a programme of work for the 2009 session, we too regret to note that despite the agreement reached on 29 May, no substantive work has been undertaken since then. The momentum regained after more than a decade of unproductive work has once again been broken, raising justified questions concerning the true resolve of all of its member States to succeed.

This missed appointment with history has two major consequences. First, the only recently recovered confidence that the international community places in the ability of the Conference on Disarmament to contribute effectively to strengthening international security has once again been affected. It may be affected permanently. Secondly, and more practically, the start of the negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons has been postponed without any deadline being set. Yet decision CD/1864, by entrusting responsibility for those negotiations to a working group of the Conference on Disarmament, had stressed their urgent nature.

My country's disappointment is thus commensurate with its ambitions in the area of general disarmament, while there is once again a diminishing prospect that others will share France's commitment to halt production of fissile material as well as its specific measures, in particular the dismantling of former production facilities, which it has already undertaken.

France, Madam President, wishes to pay tribute to your tireless efforts, which have been a continuation of the initiatives undertaken and supported by your predecessors as President, and the outstanding spirit of conciliation you have displayed, which is by no means the least of your qualities.

The President: I thank the representative of France for her statement, and I now give the floor to the representative of Malaysia.

Mr. Azril (Malaysia): My delegation wishes to join others in welcoming the new Ambassador of the Netherlands to the Conference on Disarmament. We look forward to working together with him.

My delegation has always hoped that the Conference on Disarmament would begin with its substantive work following the adoption of the programme of work as outlined in CD/1864. Indeed, we are dismayed by the fact that the Conference on Disarmament has yet to start crucial substantive work. The Conference should not again fall into the traps of the past. The failures in history are to be learned and not repeated. We should not allow the Conference on Disarmament to fall back into the quagmire that has beleaguered it for the past 10 years. The Conference must assume its role as the sole international, multilateral negotiating body.

In our statement of 30 June 2009, we expressed our support for CD/1866/Rev.1 and CD/1867, as we were convinced that both decisions are the means to move forward. In this regard, my delegation naturally supports draft decision CD/1870/Rev.1. We believe that the draft decision contains all the necessary elements needed. It provides clarity and encapsulates much of the understanding that many have to enable the Conference to implement the programme of work. We call on all delegations to remain engaged, demonstrating political will, flexibility and good faith. Hopefully, we will be able to seek the ways and means to find consensus.

Madam President, my delegation is encouraged by your unfaltering efforts, for which we commend you. We share the sentiments expressed by the Brazilian delegation on your presidency, and we entrust to you the responsibility which needs to be fulfilled by all members of the Conference. We trust that your successor, Austria, will continue your work with the same passion and vigour that you have demonstrated. Be assured of my delegation's continued full support.

The President: I thank the representative of Malaysia for his statement. I now have some additional speakers on my list. These are Germany, the Russian Federation, Japan, Bangladesh and the United Kingdom. I give the floor to the Ambassador of Germany.

Mr. Hoffmann (Germany): Madam President, let me first of all join those who have welcomed the new Ambassador of the Netherlands.

I would like to deliver what I would call an impromptu statement, and be very brief. When I delivered my own introductory statement on 6 August, only a short time ago, I was actually really hopeful that a decade-long deadlock of the Conference on Disarmament could be overcome, and actually was so courageous as to think that it might happen on that very same day. I sensed a very broadly based willingness to finally turn the page and move forward, and I was aware, and am still aware, of very intensive efforts on your part to accommodate the remaining concerns of a procedural nature of one delegation. I wish to commend you for that, for these efforts.

Only a few days after I had the honour to participate in these gatherings, I had another honour, when, for the first time for myself, a distinguished Foreign Minister addressed this plenary, and I was very impressed to hear him encourage all of us to really get going.

It is against this background that I associate myself with the statements which we have heard so far, which express disappointment about the state of affairs and which urge us to move forward and not to become hostages to procedural issues.

I would finally urge all delegations to join a procedural draft decision which enjoys very, very wide support in this hall.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Germany for his statement, and I now give the floor to the Ambassador of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Loshchinin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Madam President, first of all allow me to express our deep gratitude to you and your colleagues among the six Presidents for this year's session for the great amount of work, including many bilateral consultations, to devise a the draft procedural solution for our forum which would take into account the interests of all States. In particular we would like to note your own tireless and very useful efforts to prepare the draft decision of the Conference contained in document CD/1870/Rev.1, and also the corresponding draft statement by the President. In our view this is the compromise which is sufficiently balanced and should be acceptable to everyone.

Once again we stress that we support the package solution proposed by you. Unfortunately, despite all the efforts which have been made, we have not yet been able to agree and adopt a decision on the implementation of the programme of work of the Conference, which is the first to be approved for many years. However, as they say "hope dies last". And we are certain that our work will soon bear fruit. Although time is becoming disastrously short and the time factor is extremely acute, we hope that we will be able to take a step forward. Ultimately it must be recognized that a good basis has been created for the beginning of substantive work in the Conference on Disarmament. And the sooner it takes place the better.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Russia for his statement, and I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Japan.

Mr. Suda (Japan): Madam President, I would like to join other delegates in warmly welcoming the new Ambassador of the Netherlands, Mr. Van Den IJssel. I would like to express the deep appreciation of my delegation to you for your brilliant leadership and the strenuous effort you have made for weeks.

Since I asked for the floor last week, my intervention here should be brief, but I have to share with the many other previous speakers our deep regret, serious concern and great disappointment at the prolonged situation here. As my delegation expressed its concern in its statement last week, the Conference on Disarmament is now at the cliff, close to telling the world of its inability to implement its own agreement based on consensus, namely CD/1864.

From all the statements we have heard in this room so far, it seems to me that it is not the intention of any single delegation to block our procedure for beginning actual work. Nevertheless, we have been told, without understanding the reasoning, that we could not start our work on all the important agenda items. It is a big puzzle, but I believe it is not impossible to solve. We have to find the solution to this puzzle very quickly by redoubling our efforts so that we can get rid of dangerous scepticism about the Conference's function.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Japan for his statement, and I would now like to give the floor to the representative of Bangladesh.

Mr. Mowla (Bangladesh): Madam President, as the Australian presidency of the Conference draws to a close, on behalf of our Ambassador, who had to leave for another meeting, I would like to convey our special tribute to you and to your delegation for the diligent and tireless efforts made during your presidency for achieving consensus on the implementation of the Conference's programme of work, as contained in document CD/1864. We join other delegations in commending your efforts to come up with CD/1870/Rev.1 as well as the complementary Presidential statement and their revised versions in a package circulated recently with a view to accommodating all concerns.

Bangladesh, as a delegation and a country, looks forward to an early consensus in the Conference on Disarmament on the beginning of substantial work. The efforts made by you and previous Presidents should only resolve our commitment to work harder to achieve an early consensus. The Conference on Disarmament must not fail to assume its mandated role as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum.

In that context, we wish the incoming Austrian presidency success in its endeavour, and the Bangladesh delegation will extend all support to Austria in its efforts.

Before concluding, my delegation would also like to extend a warm welcome to Ambassador Paul Van Den IJssel of the Netherlands to the Conference on Disarmament.

The President: I thank the representative of Bangladesh for his statement, and I now give the floor to the representative of the United Kingdom.

Ms. Adamson (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): Madam President, I would like to join others in commending you for your tireless — I think you have used the word “exhaustive” — efforts and the efforts of the P-6 for this year as well, those who came before you and earlier on in the year. I would also like to commend the flexibility shown by many Conference members trying to accommodate the concerns of some delegations. We consider that through the proposals which you have presented, many concerns have been fully addressed. But I fear that we are in the process of snatching defeat from the jaws of victory.

Why do I say that? I say that because I think that in May we broke new ground in this forum, through our collective endeavour. We had courage and we took risks, but we now seem to be unpicking a consensus which was crafted through the efforts of many people, including the P-6, including many members of this chamber.

We all come here determined to protect our national security interests. We recognize that each of us will have concerns as we begin discussions of substance. But in the view of

the United Kingdom, those substantive discussions are exactly the place where countries will be able to air their concerns.

I also want to join distinguished colleagues from Brazil and Colombia in urging us to look at the political context in which we meet, with activities and enthusiasm in many different regions of the world and in many different countries for making progress on many issues in the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament agenda. I think, as we look at the people who have spoken this morning, we also see that same global reflection of the will to get on with discussions.

So, I will be very brief in concluding as to what the United Kingdom would like to see happen. I started by saying that we are at risk of snatching defeat from the jaws of victory, but I think we still can get back on track. I think we can still demonstrate to the world that we meant it when we made our collective endeavour in May that we can implement our own decision.

The word for “victory” in Greek is “Nike”, the god of victory. There is a certain producer who has a slogan associated with what we know as Nike. That slogan is “Just do it!” So with that, I hope that we can just do it.

The President: I thank the representative of the United Kingdom for her encouraging words. I would now like to give the floor to the Ambassador of China.

Mr. Wang Qun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I also welcome the distinguished Ambassador of the Netherlands to join the work of the Conference on Disarmament, particularly at this critical time.

I really liked the last phrase of what the representative of the United Kingdom said a moment ago: “Let’s just do it”. China supports the Conference beginning substantive work as quickly as possible. China supports negotiating a fissile material cut-off treaty as soon as possible, and will participate actively in this process. This position was clearly expressed by Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi when he addressed the Conference on the twelfth of this month. This is our position.

But how are we to get moving on the work before us? In my view, there are three important points. First, we need to be clear on what issues are before us. Second, we need to clearly define our goals. As the representative of the United Kingdom just said, let’s get to work. We need to get started on the substantive work of the Conference. Third, on the basis of the first two points, we must find a way to resolve these issues and reach our goals, rather than simply expressing disappointment or making accusations.

In this regard, I think that the distinguished Ambassador Jazaïry of Algeria has set a good example for us, one that has enabled us to come up with the workplan of 29 May. The Chinese delegation also appreciates the unremitting efforts of the distinguished Ambassador of Algeria throughout his tenure as President of the Conference. I feel that under the present circumstances, all parties should continue to work together, focusing on where the problems are and on finding suitable ways to make progress in our work. The Chinese delegation stands ready to make its own best efforts to promote the start of our substantive work as soon as possible.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of China for his statement. I have no more speakers on my list. I see the Ambassador of Pakistan, then Sweden.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): Madam President, since I have not had the opportunity to do so, I would like at the outset to welcome our colleagues, the Ambassadors of Bangladesh, Germany, New Zealand and the Netherlands.

I would sincerely like to commend your dynamism and commitment to move the Conference on Disarmament forward. You have presided over this Conference in an

extremely professional and cooperative manner. You are aware that Pakistan has always contributed positively and constructively to this process related to the implementation of the Conference's programme of work, which was adopted on 29 May 2009, in keeping with our national security interests.

On 10 August 2009 Pakistan circulated its proposals with regard to CD/1870/Rev.1 to the Conference members to convey our views in a transparent manner in order to move the Conference's work forward. This was a clear demonstration of our constructive approach and our commitment, which remains undiminished. That remains our official and formal stance. For the ease of all delegations, we will have it circulated as an official document of the Conference as well.

As you are also aware, we have remained engaged with you in the process as a measure of flexibility. We appreciate your efforts and your wisdom to achieve our common objective, and I am glad to say that we have been able to reach agreement on a number of key issues. Unfortunately, however, some other issues and concerns still remain to be addressed. Nevertheless, we remain prepared to continue our constructive engagement. We hope that we can reach an agreement as soon as possible so that we can adopt a decision on the implementation on the programme of work.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Pakistan for his statement, and despite perhaps the fact that we have not reached a conclusion, I would also like to thank you for the very good spirit in which we continue to conduct our consultations.

I would now like to give the floor to the Ambassador of Sweden.

Mr. Hellgren (Sweden): Madam President, I speak today in my capacity as President of the European Union, just to remind all delegations that the EU expressed its views on the current situation in the Conference on Disarmament in a statement here in this hall on 10 August. Unfortunately the situation in the Conference on Disarmament is unchanged, and the profound disappointment that we expressed 10 days ago remains. And I note that more than a dozen delegations have spoken today on a similar note.

The reason I take the floor now is to express, on behalf of the European Union, our sincere appreciation to you for the way you have led the Conference during your tenure. We particularly appreciate your energy and tenacity in turning every possible stone to overcome the very last procedural objections. The Conference on Disarmament could not have been in better and more competent hands, and we thank you for it.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Sweden. Are there any delegations that would like to take the floor at this time? I give the floor to the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Im (Republic of Korea): Madam President, I hope that I will be the last speaker this morning, and I was wondering whether I would take the floor at this critical juncture, but while listening to the distinguished delegate from Pakistan, which I still think is very encouraging, we still have time to reach an agreement, even though we do not have much time to go, but nevertheless, I just want to say that instead of "Just do it", I want to say that the one country which could not join consensus must do it before it is too late.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea. Are there any other delegations that would like to take the floor? I see the Ambassador of Japan.

Mr. Suda (Japan): I am sorry for asking for the floor again, but on a quite different matter. I would just like to inform all of you that there will be a seminar, which will be organized by UNIDIR in collaboration with the Swiss Department of Foreign Affairs and the delegation of Japan. There will be briefings and lectures by the IPFM members on fissile material issues. It will start at 10 a.m. tomorrow morning here in this room.

The President: Thank you very much for reminding us of that important seminar. Now are there any other speakers who would like to take the floor? That does not seem to be the case.

May I thank all of you for your statements and for the very strong support that States have shown for starting substantive work? May I also thank you all very much for the kind words addressed to me? I would like to say I very warmly appreciate the support that colleagues have given.

Today is the last plenary convened under the Australian presidency. It is with pleasure — and I confess a slight sense of relief — that I will shortly hand over the baton to my very able friend and colleague, Ambassador Christian Strohal of Austria.

The Conference on Disarmament adopted a programme of work on 29 May after many years of failing to do so. This was acclaimed by world leaders. We have yet to meet their expectations. We have yet to implement the programme of work, and as has been clear from discussion this morning, I regret to advise you that as of this morning, consensus is still not possible.

To those unfamiliar with the arcane workings of this chamber, this state of affairs is neither understandable nor acceptable. To those within it, it is all too familiar and dispiriting. Successive Presidents have sought to reach agreement on what should have been straightforward procedural decisions on the appointment of Chairs and Special Coordinators and a timetable of meetings. For our part, we consulted extensively with delegations and, as I have said before, accommodated all issues put to us by all delegations, before tabling CD/1870/Rev.1.

As the United Kingdom said a few moments ago, Conference members showed great flexibility in getting to that point, and we thank them for it. It is therefore disappointing that consensus has continued to prove elusive. Still, right to the end of our presidency, we have continued to consult on possible adjustments to the text that would enable the Conference to start some substantive work in 2009, however truncated and modest that might be. I think I can speak for my Austrian colleague, too, when I say that that door remains open.

I think we all understand that States have important national security interests at stake. The place to advance and protect them is in the negotiations, not through delaying the implementation of a consensus decision, CD/1864.

For Conference members should be in no doubt: negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty will happen, and substantive meaningful work on other Conference on Disarmament agenda items will happen. That is because the overwhelming majority of States believe it imperative to address serious disarmament and non-proliferation challenges, and to do so now.

The impetus for progress was demonstrated very encouragingly on the first day of Australia's presidency, when former Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans delivered an informative and dynamic presentation on the work of the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament. The lively and informed debate he generated showed how strong the appetite is for tackling nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. It should give us all hope that once the Conference on Disarmament moves from process to substance, it has the potential to contribute significantly to a more secure world. It is up to all of us to ensure that that potential is realized.

Finally, I should like to thank all delegations for their patience, helpful ideas and sheer staying power. Many of you may feel relieved that you won't be receiving yet another phone call from the Australian Ambassador next week, seeking your views on or drumming

up support for yet another iteration of the text. But I am deeply grateful to all of you for receiving those phone calls, for your wise advice, good humour and friendship.

I would also like to thank the Secretary-General and secretariat colleagues for their advice and support, as well as the tireless efforts of my excellent team in the Australian Mission, and of course the interpreters, without whom we would not be able to operate.

I am very grateful, too, for the collegiality and sense of common purpose provided by my P-6 colleagues. My warmest wishes to Ambassador Strohal as he leads us into the final stretch for 2009.

This then concludes our business for today. The next plenary meeting of the Conference, under the presidency of Austria, will be announced in due time through the Conference secretariat.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.