
Conference on Disarmament

26 January 2010

English

Final record of the one thousand one hundred and sixty-fourth plenary meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 26 January 2010, at 10.10 a.m.

President: Mr. Md. Abdul Hannan.....(Bangladesh)

The President: I declare open the 1164th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Allow me to extend a warm welcome to our distinguished guests today: Dr. Dipu Moni, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh, and Mr. Sergio Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs. Their presence here among us today is a clear testimony of the importance that both attach to the work of this distinguished body.

I have the pleasure and the honour to invite Dr. Dipu Moni, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh, to take the floor.

Ms. Moni (Bangladesh): At the outset, on behalf of the Government of Bangladesh and on my own behalf, I would like to express our deep sorrow and condolences to the people of Haiti for the tragic loss they have sustained in the wake of the catastrophic earthquake. Bangladesh feels particularly saddened by the tragedy as a country that has contributed over the years to the United Nations peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts in Haiti. We are sending a medical team to Haiti to serve those who are in need there. We also mourn the loss of United Nations personnel who had dedicated their lives to the service of the people of Haiti.

I am addressing the Conference on Disarmament at a time when hopes are running high that the Conference on Disarmament, after years of deadlock, can move ahead with its mandated task. I believe the necessary political will is there now to advance our work on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. Globally, there are a number of positive developments in the area of disarmament, which makes us optimistic that we can indeed make progress towards a nuclear-weapon-free world.

The adoption of a work programme by the Conference last year was welcomed by many, including Bangladesh. There was a widespread expectation that the Conference would resume substantive negotiations soon. Unfortunately, it did not happen, as the Conference could not resolve differences over how to implement the work programme in subsequent months.

The inability of the Conference to begin disarmament negotiations has not helped the image of the Conference on Disarmament. There may be those who choose to paint the Conference as a cold war institution, unable to change with the changing times. And there are those who cannot dream that disarmament objectives can be realized. We acknowledge our journey towards a nuclear-weapon-free world will not be easy. It is an uphill task. Progress will be slow. There will be unexpected twists and turns at every corner. Unanticipated setbacks may reverse our momentum. But should the difficulties that we shall surely face ahead deter us from beginning our quest? I believe not.

Disarmament is too noble an objective to forgo. We must press on with energy, dedication and perseverance. We cannot give up hope, because that would be like giving up hope on the future of humankind.

Every journey begins with a first step. Often, that can be the most difficult thing to accomplish. I am happy that today the Conference will take that all important first step. Work can then be started in earnest to achieve a consensus on a work programme and its implementation this year so that the Conference can begin substantive work at an early date.

Bangladesh remains committed to the objectives of disarmament and non-proliferation. We steadfastly support a multilateral approach to non-proliferation and disarmament. We are prepared to work with all delegations in the Conference and in other multilateral disarmament forums to realize our shared aspirations. We will not give up hope; and neither should anyone else. As the first President of the Conference for the 2010 session, Bangladesh will continue to make efforts to give a good start to its proceedings, a

steady and solid start that will build the foundation for achieving tangible progress in the areas of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

The trust and cooperation extended to us by all members are our strength. I thank you for your generous support to our presidency. We must continue in this spirit in the coming days.

Bangladesh attaches great importance to general and complete disarmament. It is our constitutional commitment. We are convinced that armaments are not part of the solution we seek in efforts to attain a secure and peaceful world. I need not emphasize Bangladesh's abiding commitment to international peace and security, which is reflected also through our strong participation in United Nations peacekeeping and peacebuilding endeavours across the world.

We believe that weapons of mass destruction pose the gravest threat to mankind. We continue to hold that only the total elimination of nuclear weapons can provide the guarantee against the use or threat of use of such weapons. For almost four decades, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has remained a cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. As we approach this year's NPT Review Conference, Bangladesh looks forward to an outcome that will adequately address all three pillars of the treaty: nuclear non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Bangladesh is a strong believer in peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We value the potential of nuclear energy to boost underdeveloped economies. We also acknowledge that such peaceful pursuits would have to be undertaken in accordance with international safeguards.

Bangladesh welcomes the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various regions. We support the establishment of such regimes in South Asia, the Middle East and other parts of the world where this is not yet a reality.

While we must continue to work for the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction, we must not lose sight of the threats posed by the proliferation of conventional weapons and the continued use of land mines and other inhumane weapons. Bangladesh supports and urges the early conclusion of an arms trade treaty to ensure the transparent transfer of conventional weapons.

Let me now turn to the particular issues that are being addressed by the Conference. We attach considerable importance to the issue of negative security assurances. We stress that non-nuclear States parties to the NPT have a legitimate right to receive unconditional assurances from the nuclear-weapon States that the latter will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against them. We urge the Conference to undertake renewed and vigorous efforts to develop a legally binding framework for providing such assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States.

Bangladesh supports the beginning of negotiations for banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other explosive devices. We believe that such a treaty has to be non-discriminatory and effectively verifiable. Negotiations should extend to stocks, without which any such treaty may not be comprehensive.

Outer space is the common heritage of humankind. It must be explored for peaceful purposes only. We fear that the militarization of outer space could spiral into yet another arms race. This "multi-billion dollar race for destruction" has to be prevented. Major space-faring nations have the obligation to avert the weaponization of outer space. We would like to see progress in the Conference in this area as well.

When the cold war ended, many people talked about a peace dividend. They hoped that we would be turning swords into ploughshares and reaping benefits from the transition. This proved to be illusive within a few years. Since the mid-1990s, global military spending has gone on a dangerous upward curve reaching US\$ 1.46 trillion in 2009. This amount corresponds to more than US\$ 200 for each person in the world, including the ones who live on less than a dollar a day. At a time when the global financial and economic crisis is threatening to roll back the development gains and making attainment of the Millennium Development Goals extremely difficult, such mindless expenditure cannot be condoned, and must be avoided.

We therefore urge all countries, especially the major armament-producing and — procuring countries that are primarily responsible for the rise in global military expenditure, to take concrete disarmament steps. Resources need to be freed to address pressing development challenges. It must be realized that we can ill afford to continue spending such staggering amounts for the merchants of destruction when our people go hungry, cannot afford essential services and are vulnerable to disease, climate change and natural disasters.

I would conclude by urging all countries to do their part in the Conference, and beyond. We must do the right thing, and do it without further delay. The time for disarmament is now.

The President: I thank the foreign minister for her statement. I now invite the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Sergio Duarte, to address the Conference.

Mr. Duarte (High Representative for Disarmament Affairs): It is an honour and great pleasure to address the Conference on Disarmament for the second time as High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.

First, allow me to express my sincere gratitude to foreign minister Moni for her presence here, which underscores Bangladesh's strong commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation. I also congratulate Bangladesh on its assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament at the beginning of its 2010 session. I wish to convey personally to Ms. Moni the gratitude of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for inviting him to join her in addressing the Conference at this critical juncture. He was looking forward to this opportunity, but he felt compelled to remain at Headquarters in New York to coordinate relief efforts in Haiti.

In his video message to the Conference last week, the Secretary-General expressed his belief and his hope — based on real opportunities for concrete action — that 2010 can be a historic year for progress in disarmament and non-proliferation. These are sentiments that are shared throughout the international community. There is also widespread agreement that this progress should be registered in the form of legal commitments — binding obligations that advance the rule of law in disarmament. Ever since the days when I served as a junior member of the Brazilian delegation to the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament back in the 1960s, I have appreciated the vital need for one central arena for States to come together to negotiate legally binding norms for disarmament.

Today, the Conference on Disarmament has this unique role to play in the United Nations disarmament machinery. Its uniqueness rests in its responsibility to negotiate legal norms that are fully multilateral in scope, and the time has surely come for the Conference to overcome past obstacles and fulfil this solemn mandate.

Many of you here today also participated in the First Committee of the General Assembly last October. You will recall how speaker after speaker took note of the auspicious developments that occurred in 2009, especially in the field of nuclear disarmament. The presidents of the Russian Federation and the United States have repeatedly expressed their commitment to the goal of achieving a world free of nuclear

weapons, and, by all indications, the two countries will soon conclude a new bilateral strategic arms reduction treaty. Last September, the United Nations Security Council held its first summit ever to address nuclear disarmament issues. And intergovernmental initiatives, such as the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, and civil society projects, like Global Zero, are making their own contributions to this groundswell of international interest in moving the disarmament agenda forward.

Through your relentless efforts and commitment, the Conference on Disarmament made its own contribution to this momentum last year by adopting a substantive programme of work after a decade-long deadlock over procedural issues. Though the Conference was later unable to build on this progress, I am confident that your resolve to start negotiations this year remains firm.

Needless to say, the Conference on Disarmament continues to have strong support throughout the United Nations. I note that Security Council resolution 1887 — adopted unanimously at its summit last year — called upon the Conference on Disarmament to negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices, and welcomed the adoption by the Conference of a programme of work in 2009. It also requested all member States to cooperate in guiding the Conference to an early commencement of substantive work.

For its part, the General Assembly adopted, by consensus, resolutions on the Conference on Disarmament and a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other explosive devices. The General Assembly requested all members of the Conference to cooperate with the presidents of the Conference in their efforts to commence substantive work in this session, including negotiations on a fissile material treaty.

In this connection, I wish to highlight the Secretary-General's support for the immediate start of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on such a treaty, as he himself stated in this chamber last week. A fissile material cut-off treaty is a goal included in the Secretary-General's five-point action plan of 8 December last year.

It is my conviction that this year the Conference will further intensify its work, agree on a programme of work promptly, and launch long-awaited negotiations.

In conclusion, let me assure all delegations that the Office for Disarmament Affairs — through its Geneva branch — will provide all necessary support for your work. I look forward to working closely with Mr. Ordzhonikidze, the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Conference on Disarmament, to facilitate member States' efforts in fulfilling its historic role as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum.

The President: I thank the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs for his statement.

I would now like to open the floor to any delegation that has any comments related to the subjects touched on by the two statements made this morning. After hearing those delegations, I intend to suspend the meeting for a moment, in order to escort the minister from the chamber. When we resume the meeting, we will take up other issues, including the agenda and the participation of States not members of the Conference in its work.

I give the floor to the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Mr. Ri Jang Gon (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Mr. President, on behalf of the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, I would like to sincerely congratulate Bangladesh on its assumption of the first presidency of the 2010 session of the Conference on Disarmament. My delegation also wishes to welcome Dr.

Dipu Moni, the foreign minister of Bangladesh, who has addressed this plenary meeting. My delegation will cooperate with the President and will remain constructively engaged in the work of the Conference.

The President: I thank you for your remarks. Are there any further comments? If there are none, then this meeting is suspended.

The meeting was suspended at 10.30 a.m. and resumed at 10.40 a.m.

The President: The 1164th plenary meeting is resumed.

The secretariat has received six more requests from States who are not members of the Conference. They are submitted by Albania, Armenia, Denmark, Nepal, Saudi Arabia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and are contained in CD/WP.555/Add.1, which is before you.

May I take it that the Conference decides to invite these States to participate in accordance with the rules of procedure?

It was so decided.

Are the relevant non-member State delegations in the room? I see that they are here.

Let me move to the next issue.

At this moment, I would like to invite the Conference to take a decision on the draft agenda for the 2010 session, as contained in document CD/WP.556. As indicated in my consultations, I understand that all members are now in a position to adopt the draft agenda in CD/WP.556.

May I take it that the Conference decides to adopt for its 2010 session the agenda contained in CD/WP.556?

It is so decided.

This agenda will be issued as an official document of the Conference by the secretariat.

I would now like to deliver the following statement: "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 a 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 am very happy that the Conference has adopted the agenda. I will now make some remarks.

You are aware of the discussions since 19 January 2010 with regard to the adoption of the agenda. There was a proposal for the inclusion of two additional items in the draft agenda. The discussions on this matter were held in the plenary, which is reflected in the official records. During the course of the discussions on this matter, it was recognized that, in accordance with rule 27 and rule 30 of the rules of procedure, every delegation has the right to table proposals and raise any subject relevant to the work of the Conference in the plenary.

I would like to express my appreciation to all delegations with whom I consulted with the objective of reaching consensus on the draft agenda. I would like to thank all delegations for their flexibility and cooperation, which has led to the adoption of the agenda.

I will now open the floor for statements by delegations. So far I have six delegations to make statements. The first speaker on my list is the Ambassador of Japan.

Mr. Suda (Japan): Mr. President, please allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament at this important juncture. It is often said that the early stage of the Conference's annual session is always difficult. This may be especially true for this year. I am fully confident, however, that under your thoughtful leadership the Conference will quickly find a path to substantive work. I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation as you guide us.

I would also like to express our deep gratitude to Ms. Dipu Moni, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh, for her visit to us and her very enlightening and encouraging statement.

The adoption of the programme of work, CD/1864, on 29 May last year was a cause for understandable celebration in this chamber. Yet we have failed to implement that programme of work, the first in 11 years. Substantive discussions on agenda items and, most importantly, negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty did not commence owing to some concerns of a member State. This was a perplexing situation to explain, given that all the members of the Conference had agreed to CD/1864 and that the procedural documents, which were the focus of the impasse, simply pertained to the implementation of that decision.

The Conference on Disarmament over the duration of its existence has played a vital role as the only multilateral disarmament negotiating forum in the world, and Japan believes that it should continue to play such a role in the future. At the same time, we need to realize that at present we stand at a critical moment in the long history of the Conference. With the increasing momentum towards nuclear disarmament, the world has high expectations of the Conference's activities, and it is our obligation to meet those expectations by engaging in substantive discussions and negotiations on important disarmament issues.

It stands to reason that the Conference on Disarmament must quickly explore a way to start substantive work. For that, my delegation believes in two things: firstly, we should fully respect and recognize the significant progress we made last year; and secondly, at the same time, we should reflect on what the shortcomings of last year were namely, it seems to me, the lack of a multidimensional dialogue between member States not only in Geneva but in capitals and other places.

More specifically, I would like to highlight several points which my delegation believes to be important for a productive session this year:

(a) A new programme of work for this session should be based on the achievement of last year, that is CD/1864;

(b) The P6 needs to conduct broad, inclusive and transparent consultations to reach consensus on a programme of work, while taking into consideration the concerns and interests of member States;

(c) All member States should manifest the utmost level of flexibility to the end of achieving consensus on a programme of work and related decisions;

(d) In this context, it should be recalled and ensured that security concerns and other interests of any member State can be raised, discussed and negotiated, once substantive work has started;

(e) In view of the NPT Review Conference in May, all delegates should maintain intensive communication with their respective capitals on the situation in the Conference on Disarmament and encourage them to dialogue with each other. Through all these efforts, we have to make another historic move forward this year in a consultative and constructive manner.

Before closing my remarks today, I would like to draw the Conference's attention to the report of the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, which was launched in Tokyo on 15 December last year. My delegation, together with the Australian delegation, submitted a synopsis of that report to the secretariat as an official document of the Conference. On Monday next, here in the Council Chamber, a seminar will be held under the auspices of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), at which a former foreign minister of Australia, Gareth Evans, will make a presentation on the report. I hope that many of our colleagues will attend the seminar and join discussions on this extremely important report on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

The President: I thank Ambassador Suda for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of the United States of America, Mr. Larson.

Mr. Larson (United States of America): Mr. President, as this is the first time I have taken the floor this year, allow me to begin by congratulating you on assuming the post as first President of the Conference on Disarmament in 2010, and to thank you for your extensive efforts already this year. I wish to assure you and all the members of the P6 of my delegation's full support for your collective efforts throughout this year.

I am taking the floor just over one year after the inauguration of President Obama who, in his first year in office, has repeatedly shown the commitment and leadership of the United States in addressing global non-proliferation and disarmament challenges, the latter of which include matters on which the Conference on Disarmament has been entrusted with a prominent role.

Mindful of its obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to "pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament", the United States reaffirms its full support for the Conference on Disarmament and urges it to carry out promptly its role as the premier multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. In September last year, speaking as President of the United Nations Security Council, President Obama underscored that, "In January, we will call upon countries to begin negotiations on a treaty to end the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons and other explosive devices." We recall the international community's unanimous support for General Assembly resolution 64/29 of 2009, which urged the Conference on Disarmament to agree early in 2010 on a programme of work that includes the immediate commencement of negotiations on such a treaty.

Our delegation also reiterates its support for the programme of work adopted by the Conference on Disarmament in 2009, as contained in CD/1864, which the international community welcomed by consensus through General Assembly resolution 64/64 of 2009. It is imperative that we work together and begin substantive work in 2010 at the earliest possible date. We also believe that the Conference should build directly on the foundation created by the programme of work adopted here last May. We share the conviction of those urging that the Conference on Disarmament promptly re-establish the working group called for by General Assembly resolution 64/29 to negotiate a fissile material cut-off treaty and to re-establish three additional working groups to undertake active and substantive discussions on other core elements of the agenda of the Conference, without prescribing or precluding the outcome of those discussions. We urge all member States of the Conference on Disarmament to support the prompt adoption of such a programme of work early in our session, and to support its full and immediate implementation.

This, Mr. President, is perhaps the most pivotal time for the Conference on Disarmament in many years – CD/1864 is tangible evidence that the members of this body can forge a consensus that points a way forward while preserving our rights and obligations

to protect and promote our respective national security interests. Those who claimed that the Conference on Disarmament in recent years had become an anachronism without the necessary will to fulfil its mandate were disabused of that notion in May last year. It is now our opportunity — indeed, it is our responsibility — to demonstrate that this was not an anomaly and that the Conference on Disarmament remains an effective instrument for maintaining peace and security.

Let us act soon to adopt our agenda and a new programme of work, based on last year's consensus in CD/1864.

The President: I thank Mr. Larson for his statement. I now give the floor to Ambassador Aldredi of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

Mr. Aldredi (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I have the pleasure to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of this Conference and on this success by your country, a friend with which we enjoy strong and fraternal relations. We wish you every success.

We are also pleased to welcome Her Excellency Ms. Dipu Moni, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh, and to thank her for her comprehensive and important statement, confirming the commitment of Bangladesh to establishing peace and security throughout the world based on the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons.

My country yearns for peace and security across the world and is fully convinced that this goal will not be achieved with arsenals of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction that kill and spread fear and destruction. In my country's view, the money which the major States spend on these weapons must be allocated instead to development and to the realization of the Millennium Development Goals. This was the rationale behind the initiative which my country launched on 19 December 2003 to encourage voluntary renunciation of all programmes and equipment that could be used to produce internationally prohibited weapons. This step will no doubt contribute to the promotion of peace and security, and my country looks forward to seeing action by States which possess weapons of mass destruction to rid the world of this terrifying spectre. In Africa, my country, acting through the African Union, of which it is currently president, is doing everything possible to establish peace in the continent and to resolve conflicts by peaceful means.

My country is a party to most of the disarmament treaties. It acceded to the NPT on 25 May 1975, to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction on 19 January 1982, to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction on 5 February 2004 and to other related conventions. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya has held a seat on more than one occasion on the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Executive Council of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. We look to the distinguished Conference to discuss expansion of its membership so as to allow more than 24 States, including the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, to contribute actively to the success of the Conference's disarmament negotiations, especially as these States have been on the waiting list for such a long time.

Expansion of the Conference's membership would enrich the work, allowing for greater exchanges of ideas and information that could help to put a stop to the arms race, establish international peace and security and preserve outer space, which belongs to the human heritage and is a collective asset that should never be damaged by rivalry between States seeking to conquer it and to damage and destroy its component parts, doing harm to mankind as a result.

We are fully confident that your presidency of the Conference will be crowned with success and that our discussions will serve to rid the entire world of weapons of mass destruction and to move towards the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. We are sure that all States in the region without exception are committed to eliminating these weapons, and we affirm the right of all States to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and to benefit from it in all areas of life.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Ambassador Aldredi, for his statement. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Algeria, Ambassador Jazäiry.

Mr. Jazäiry (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, as this is the first time I have taken the floor under your presidency, allow me to warmly congratulate you on the wisdom with which you have been leading our work during the 2010 session of the Conference on Disarmament. I assure you that you have the full cooperation of my delegation, which stands ready to support you in your task. I welcome the other Presidents of the 2010 session and urge them to work together to give an effective start to our endeavours in 2010, as I and the other members of the P6 of 2009 did last year. It was that cooperation that enabled us to reach agreement on CD/1864.

We were deeply inspired by the statement of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh, Ms. Dipu Moni. We were also encouraged by the statement from Mr. Duarte, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, who mentioned in particular the progress made in the negotiation of the bilateral nuclear arms reduction treaty between the United States and Russia.

In this hopeful context, the Conference on Disarmament cannot unduly disappoint the hopes that have been raised since the adoption of its 2009 programme of work.

Algeria, like all other members of the Conference, is convinced that in order to advance our disarmament goals we need everyone's collaboration. That is the beauty of the Conference on Disarmament; there are no major States or minor States. We are all concerned and we must all work together to realize our goal.

The strong commitment to multilateralism that I am recommending would certainly allow us to build a solid foundation to realize the disarmament goals set by the international community. The agreement of 29 May 2009 on our Conference's programme of work is an example of that. The Conference is called upon to play its part in full, through consensual results reached through the inclusive participation of all its members.

That is the basis on which the Conference has worked ever since its establishment, and I believe that, as has been said before, 2010 could be a historic year. The Secretary-General of the United Nations reminded us of that in his statement.

My delegation is truly delighted that the agenda for the current session of the Conference has been adopted today. It is a great day for us, and we wish to thank those who made the necessary contributions to enable us to take this promising step. In light of this, my delegation agrees with you, Mr. President, that the agenda submitted as document CD/WP.556, together with your presidential statement, are comprehensive and flexible enough to cover all the disarmament-related issues that may be addressed at this Conference.

The Conference must take advantage of this positive momentum — which, as mentioned earlier, fortunately still characterizes the international area — to fully resume its role, which might even be a leadership role in the advancement of world peace and security.

In order for that to happen, all members must work constructively and have the political will to allow the Conference on Disarmament to move forward on the substantive

issues. The difficulties that we often face in the adoption of the programme of work are due to the fact that the perfectly legitimate concerns about security are felt so keenly that they lead members to try to settle crucial points even before engaging in negotiation.

That is what is called “negotiations on negotiations”. I suggest that the Conference should aim to open negotiations within the framework of a new programme of work without any precondition or exclusions, recognizing the existence of stabilizing mechanisms to ensure that everyone’s security is taken into account.

It is, of course, important to make sure that each member’s concerns are taken into account, but it is just as important to ensure that the capacity of the Conference does not produce substantive results that would be irreparably eroded.

In light of the issues we are facing, I would like to mention the important role of NGOs. I would also like to mention the very positive role of the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament and its report, which I believe Mr. Gareth Evans will discuss with you next week.

My delegation also attaches great importance to continuing the process to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones. You are aware that the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (the Pelindaba Treaty) came into effect not long ago.

Our most sincere hope as we begin the 2010 session of the Conference on Disarmament is that we can also make progress towards establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh mentioned this earlier. We believe that the current situation, in which a State that is not a party to the NPT holds a nuclear weapon, creates an unsustainable imbalance throughout the region. The best way to ensure nuclear non-proliferation in a region that is of concern for all States is to ensure the elimination of nuclear weapons that currently exist, and to do this openly and publicly.

Mr. President, in your opening statement you mentioned the consensus reached last year on document CD/1864. You also pointed out that the goal for this year was to make a start on the substantive work, as the 2009 consensus had led us to expect. This year we need a new Conference document — I do not know what document symbol it will bear — but a new document for 2010 that will almost make us forget document CD/1864. I hope that this new document will allow us to begin our work. We are not trying to reproduce in 2010 the 2009 document CD/1864, but there was a certain logic that led us to a balance of interests in 2009. We need to be guided by that same logic to reach a balance of interests in 2010, and this should be done as rationally and quickly as possible.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Algeria for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Turkey, Ambassador Üzümcü.

Mr. Üzümcü (Turkey): Mr. President, since this is the first time I have taken the floor under your presidency, allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I wish you and your P6 colleagues success in your endeavours to advance the work of the Conference this year. I can assure you of my delegation’s full support and cooperation.

I also welcome the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Sergio Duarte.

We listened carefully to the message of the Secretary-General of the United Nations at the first plenary meeting of the Conference on 19 January. As is customary, the Secretary-General’s message contained wise counsel on disarmament and non-proliferation issues and encouraged the Conference to move forward.

A considerable momentum has been created in recent years in the Conference in order to overcome the stalemate which had lasted more than a decade. The adoption of the work programme after so many years has been a milestone. It has nourished hopes for the world's single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum to resume its leading role in addressing security challenges, with a view to concluding legally binding documents. CD/1864 is the culmination of the efforts of several years. It takes into account numerous proposals tabled since 1999.

However, we have not been able to translate this decision into concrete action. We would wish indeed to start substantive work following the adoption of the work programme, during which every member State would have the opportunity to raise its sacred concerns and interests.

The Conference on Disarmament is indeed a unique institution. It is a valuable instrument by its composition and it has a special responsibility on the contemporary disarmament agenda. We should all strive to maintain the relevance of the Conference by fulfilling its fundamental task. The current international environment is highly suitable for the Conference to resume its role as a negotiating forum. The Secretary-General of the United Nations, in his personal address to the Conference last year, referred to "the new multilateralism where cooperation replaces confrontation, where creativity replaces stalemate", and he urged the Conference to seize the opportunity to move the disarmament agenda forward.

I believe that the resumption of substantive work in the Conference can provide positive impetus to the global disarmament and non-proliferation agenda. That includes the NPT Review Conference, which is now only a few months away. Needless to say, the commencement in the Conference on Disarmament of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty is among the 13 practical steps foreseen in 2000, along with the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We believe that the Review Conference must revitalize, and indeed build on, the conclusions of 1995 and 2000.

Turkey believes in the virtue of promoting international peace and security through arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament. We urge the universalization and full implementation of the related instruments. We must seize every opportunity which will strengthen effective multilateralism in security issues.

We welcome the adoption of the agenda today. Our agenda is comprehensive and flexible, enabling us to address all issues in the field of arms control and disarmament. Furthermore, Mr. President, your statement has reassured the membership about the possibility of dealing with any issue once there is consensus.

Our next step must be to agree on a programme of work. We encourage the P6 to continue their consultations in order to achieve that. This will allow us not only to commence negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty, but also to realize parallel advances on other agenda items. These include substantive work on the core issues, namely, nuclear disarmament, prevention of an arms race in outer space and negative security assurances.

To conclude, let me reiterate our strong support to Bangladesh and other P6 States and wish them all success.

The President: I thank Ambassador Üzümcü for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa.

Mr. Combrink (South Africa): Mr. President, since this is the first time that I have taken the floor during the 2010 session, allow me to congratulate you on assuming the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I wish to assure you and the other five incoming presidents for 2010 of my delegation's full cooperation and support, I would also

like to use this opportunity to thank the Austrian presidency for its contribution in steering our work at the end of last year. We appreciate the efforts of the outgoing and incoming presidents during the intersessional period aimed at an early resumption of substantive work this year.

My delegation welcomes the participation of the foreign minister of Bangladesh, Dr. Dipu Moni, and Mr. Sergio Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs at today's meeting and for their words of encouragement to the Conference.

At the beginning of the 2009 session of the Conference there was a great deal of enthusiasm to break the impasse that for more than a decade had prevented this body from making progress. The positive atmosphere and cooperative spirit among members of the Conference resulted in the adoption of a programme of work which, among other things, provided the Conference with a mandate to negotiate a legally binding instrument banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. While the adoption of the programme of work was indeed a welcome development, it is regrettable that we have continued to be unable to implement this decision.

South Africa remains deeply committed to the achievement of a world free of nuclear weapons and to concrete nuclear disarmament measures. This commitment is informed by our belief that nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are inextricably linked and that simultaneous progress on both fronts is required. We are therefore encouraged by the pronouncements made by a number of world leaders recommitting to the achievement of a better, more secure world free from the threat posed by nuclear weapons.

For South Africa, 2010 represents a year of high expectations. This is the year when our continent will, for the first time in history, host the soccer World Cup. It is our hope that 2010 will usher in an era of cooperation and friendship within a community of nations, where we can indeed participate as equal partners committed to building a better world for all.

In the disarmament arena, we likewise have high expectations. Given the renewed commitment to nuclear disarmament, we expect the 2010 NPT Review Conference to give concrete expression and real content to the vision espoused by world leaders that has given hope for a new era of increased cooperation, peace and prosperity within a strengthened multilateral system.

In the Conference, it is South Africa's view that we should seize the moment and build upon what was achieved last year. While we share the conviction that the Conference on Disarmament should act strictly in accordance with its Rules of Procedure and that there can be no automaticity in relation to decisions made during the last session, we believe that past decisions represent important stepping stones that allow us to make steady progress in fulfilling our special responsibility as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. We can therefore not act as if the decision last year on a programme of work has no bearing on our work for 2010. It is our hope that all members will again exercise the necessary flexibility and demonstrate the positive spirit that helped us to achieve a programme of work during 2009. In this regard my delegation welcomes the adoption of the agenda today and supports the adoption of a programme of work promptly to enable an early resumption of substantive work.

Given the rules under which the Conference on Disarmament operates, the broad scope of issues covered by the agenda and our expectation that this year's programme of work will again allow for focused attention on the priorities that confront us in a manner that will not prejudice or set conditions for our deliberations, we believe that adequate guarantees exist to safeguard the security interests of all members of the Conference, while allowing us to address our collective security concerns. Some of these issues are long

overdue and we cannot continue with business as usual. What is at stake is not only the continued relevance and credibility of the Conference on Disarmament, but our collective security interests in an increasingly interconnected world marked by mutual vulnerabilities and threats.

What we are suggesting is not progress at all cost. We recognize the primary importance of the individual security needs of all States, but wish to emphasize the need for us to move beyond the narrow national security paradigm that dominated the cold war era. What we are suggesting is the necessity for progress to offset the cost of our inaction for many years. In this context, Mr. President, my delegation stands ready to work with you and all the members of the Conference with a view to resuming substantive work without further delay.

The President: I thank Mr. Combrink for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Switzerland, Ambassador Lauber.

Mr. Lauber (Switzerland): Mr. President, once again I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference. I look forward to working constructively in a cooperative spirit with you and your fellow P6 colleagues throughout the year. I would also like to express my gratitude to Dr. Dipu Moni, the foreign minister of Bangladesh and to Mr. Sergio Duarte, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for their presence in the room this morning and for their interventions. Let me also commend you, Mr. President, for the adoption of the agenda of this Conference. We should now focus all our efforts on finding an early agreement on a programme of work. My delegation is keen on making substantial progress on all four core issues.

At this juncture, I would like to share with you some of Switzerland's views on the current state of play in the Conference on Disarmament and the challenges ahead.

The year 2009 did represent a breakthrough: all delegations accepted the start of negotiations in the Conference. The adoption by consensus of CD/1864, which called for the establishment of four working groups and three special coordinators, received a lot of attention around the world. Switzerland hopes that we can build on what was achieved last year and that we can implement what two General Assembly resolutions ask us to do, that is: to adopt a programme of work early this year and to begin substantive work, including negotiations.

CD/1864 represents the most appropriate base for going forward. It is the result of year-long consultations. I would like to seize this opportunity to thank last year's P6, particularly Ambassador Jazäiry of Algeria, for all their efforts. My delegation hopes that this year's P6 will very soon present delegations with an updated draft decision to consider.

In this process, we are confident that all delegations will keep in mind that, in today's interdependent world, security is a cross-regional and global challenge. We hope members of the Conference will not put the relevance and credibility of the sole multilateral negotiating forum at risk at a time when there are clear signs of renewed commitment towards nuclear disarmament. As pointed out by the foreign minister of Bangladesh this morning, a non-functioning Conference on Disarmament and a failing disarmament machinery would not serve anybody's interest.

There are a number of challenges ahead of us. Progress is an urgent and joint responsibility. I would like us all to remember constantly that members of the Conference bear an enormous responsibility which goes beyond individual security interests and which has to respond to the expectations of a world outside the walls of this room. In this context, we regret that civil society is not able to actively participate and play a constructive role as they may do in other multilateral processes. We are confident that our discussion could only benefit from a more direct engagement with civil society.

The recently published report of the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, a joint initiative between Japan and Australia, stresses the inherently inhumane nature of nuclear weapons. Switzerland values the systematic and pragmatic approach the Commission took and fully supports its assessments as well as its ambitious short-, medium- and long-term goals, as a timely and most relevant contribution, which should be seriously considered by all conference and NPT delegations. We particularly welcome the phased approach of delegitimizing nuclear weapons, reducing their role and eventually outlawing them. All existing efforts in this direction must be increased.

A first logical step towards this goal would be to start negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. We see such a treaty as an essential pillar to complement the existing nuclear treaty regime and build a bridge between NPT and non-NPT States. In our view, it is high time to ban the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. In addition, we need a step-by-step reduction of the fissile material available for nuclear weapons. Safeguarding such material is a key condition for subsequent deep cuts in nuclear arsenals.

While the establishment of a cap on the total amount of fissile material available for weapons is a key issue, we believe that focusing exclusively on future production would not be an honest assessment of the situation. Excess and civilian stocks are huge and certainly part of the problem. We therefore believe that the scope of such a treaty must be sufficiently broad. For the moment, we are not convinced that voluntary measures could do the trick or would be appropriate to creating the conditions for nuclear disarmament.

Another field where Switzerland is keen to see progress is that of negative security assurances. Existing assurances are not legally binding and are not unconditional. It is difficult to accept that decades after giving up the option to ever acquire these weapons, non-nuclear-weapon States that are in full compliance with all articles of the NPT, that have agreed to the infinite extension of the NPT, and that have accepted the Additional Protocol still have not received unconditional and legally binding security assurances. We see the Conference on Disarmament as the suitable forum for starting discussions on a legally binding treaty in this domain. We are confident that such an arrangement could be engineered in a way which strengthens the NPT regime and does not weaken it.

Regarding the prevention of an arms race in outer space, we have already stated that we see secure and permanent access as a key principle, a right that every State should be endowed with. Space applications play a crucial role in providing essential services for all of us. Complementary measures consisting of transparency and confidence-building measures as well as new legally binding instruments seem to us necessary in order to enhance outer space security. We have also made specific remarks regarding the Sino-Russian draft treaty on prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space. We hope 2010 will provide for an open and specific debate on these issues.

In the recent past, we have seen some very encouraging developments. My delegation hopes that the new momentum in disarmament will help us to build bridges and overcome existing difficulties. Let us not forget that while words and good intentions are needed to create a good atmosphere, they alone will not move the disarmament agenda forward. Real action is needed now.

The President: I thank Ambassador Lauber for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Australia, Ms. Valerie Grey.

Ms. Grey (Australia): Mr. President, as this is the first time I have taken the floor this year, let me congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference and assure you of the full support and cooperation of my delegation.

Australia looks forward to working constructively and collegially with you and with all of the six presidents to make this year as productive as possible for the Conference. Let me reiterate Australia's support for the P6 platform, which has made a very useful contribution to the smooth functioning of the Conference on Disarmament. I should like to thank you and your colleagues for the very professional consultations Bangladesh has undertaken to prepare for the presidency – both with all delegations to the Conference and with your P6 colleagues and through the recent weeks of consultation leading up to today's successful adoption of the agenda. As one of last year's presidents, Australia fully recognizes the value of comprehensive, transparent consultations in the Conference on Disarmament.

The disarmament agenda has become more active and more engaged. We have seen real, tangible commitments to disarmament. We welcomed the positive atmosphere of negotiations between Russia and the United States aimed at reducing nuclear arsenals.

Australia welcomed the success of the 2009 Conference on Disarmament in agreeing, in CD/1864 on a programme of work. That programme of work was achieved through comprehensive, extensive consultations with all members of the Conference. It set out a good basis to move forward. But we proved unable to take a further step forward, the step that would get the Conference back to work. Despite our agreement on the programme of work in CD/1864, agreement on how to implement the programme of work in CD/1864 has eluded us.

Australia does not underestimate the challenges of translating abstract goals into practical steps. Avoiding those challenges is not the solution. Australia remains determined to achieve progress towards nuclear disarmament. We are committed to the Conference on Disarmament as the right place to begin work to implement the practical steps towards nuclear disarmament.

Australia's priority in this year's Conference on Disarmament will be to take the practical step forward, early in 2010, of agreeing on a programme of work enabling negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. Such a treaty is an immediate priority in our efforts to realize nuclear disarmament. Australia, together with the vast majority of members of the Conference looks to 2010 as the year in which we act upon our long-stated support for such a treaty, put our negotiating mandate into effect and take practical steps towards achieving a reduction in the availability of fissile material. Australia considers that the programme of work that we achieved in CD/1864 remains a good basis for the next step forward.

We need to get the Conference on Disarmament back to work. Negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty is a key practical step this Conference can take to address both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, and to get the Conference back to work.

Australia is strongly committed to nuclear disarmament. That is why in 2008 the Australian and Japanese prime ministers established the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament. The Commission's recently released report restates the case for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. The report puts forward ambitious, pragmatic and compelling plans of action to achieve our goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world. Australia's Co-Chair of the Commission and former foreign minister, Professor Gareth Evans, will launch this report in Geneva on 1 February here in the Council Chamber under the auspices of UNIDIR. All of you will have received copies of the report. The synopsis of the report is being circulated as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament, in all six United Nations languages. The Australian Government considers that this report makes a significant contribution to the international debate on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. I very much look forward to an engaged productive discussion on the recommendations proposed in this report. The Australian Government is

giving its fullest attention to the report's recommendations, and we look forward to sharing our views with you in this Conference.

Australia looks forward to supporting the P6 presidents throughout 2010 in their efforts to get the Conference on Disarmament back to work.

The President: I thank Ms. Valery Grey for her statement. I now give the floor to Ambassador Zamir Akram of Pakistan.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): Mr. President, I will restrict my comments today simply to the adoption of the agenda. Before I come to that, however, I would like to place on record my delegation's deep appreciation for the comprehensive and insightful statement made by the foreign minister of Bangladesh. We welcome in particular the comments that she made that a fissile material treaty must also take into account the issue of stocks, which is a position that my country fully endorses. We also welcome her remarks that the other three cores issues on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament, namely, nuclear disarmament, prevention of an arms race in outer space, and negative security assurances must also be given due priority by the Conference.

I would also like to welcome Mr. Sergio Duarte, whom I have known since the 1980s, when we were young officers here in the Conference on Disarmament.

I have taken the floor, Mr. President, to express my delegation's appreciation to you specifically for the manner in which you have shown that we can accommodate everyone's concerns and everyone's point of view. In this context I appreciate the remarks that you have made reminding us all of articles 27 and 30 of the rules of procedure under which my delegation had sought to include in the agenda two items, namely, conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels, and missiles in all their aspects. As you have pointed out, and as I am sure all of us recognize, Pakistan has the right under the rules of procedure to take up these issues, and we shall do so at an appropriate time. I only want to express my regret at the tendency of some of our colleagues to rush to the media and to project our position as having created an obstacle to the adoption of the agenda, which was far from the objective that we had.

These are issues that we feel are very important and some that relate not only to our region but to other regions as well. It is an unfortunate fact that when we have tried to raise these issues of conventional arms control in our region we have been informed that these are issues that go beyond the region. Then when we raise them in multilateral forums, we are again informed that these are regional issues and cannot be taken up in multilateral forums. So we are actually at a loss. In any event, I think the rules of procedure of the Conference on Disarmament are comprehensive enough to allow us to state our positions.

I want to state once again for the record that it was not my Government's intention to block the adoption of the agenda. In fact, we are very keen to move beyond the consideration of the agenda to the more important task of working out a programme of work. I can assure you that we will make our contribution in this regard as well.

Thank you once again, Mr. President, for the manner in which you have tried to help every delegation here to reach consensus on the agenda.

The President: I thank Ambassador Akram for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Tunisia, Mr. Bel Kefi.

Mr. Bel Kefi (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, as this is the first time my delegation has taken the floor at the first meeting of the Conference on Disarmament in 2010, I wish to congratulate you on the accession of Bangladesh to the presidency of the Conference. I would like to express our gratitude for the consultations you have held and the open and transparent manner in which you have led our work, which has resulted in the

successful adoption today of the agenda of the Conference. I would also like to welcome our eminent guests, Ms. Dipu Moni and Mr. Sergio Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, and to thank them for the important messages they have given us today. Allow me, Mr. President, to draw attention to the statement made by the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, whose delegation is taking part in our work as an observer and has reiterated its request for admission to the Conference on Disarmament. Mr. President, the positive atmosphere of our work in recent years, as reflected in particular in the adoption on 29 May 2009 of the programme of work contained in document CD/1864, should encourage us to move forward and to continue our efforts with a view to, in due course, examining in a favourable light the requests for admission from candidate countries which, like Libya, wish to join in member State's efforts to begin the substantive work of the Conference on Disarmament in order to advance constructive negotiations aimed at achieving a world marked by peace, security and peaceful coexistence.

The President: I thank the representative of Tunisia for his statement. My list of speakers is exhausted. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? I give the floor to the Ambassador of Brazil.

Mr. de Macedo Soares (Brazil): Mr. President, I do not wish to let this opportunity pass without thanking you for your efforts to overcome the somewhat unexpected difficulties we had concerning the agenda; you managed in one week to conduct consultations and come to a solution. I think this reinforces the decision on our agenda and puts us in the right frame of mind to take up our substantive work.

According to the rules of procedure, in my experience here in the Conference on Disarmament, I have heard delegations on several occasions refer to the different points of interest to their Governments that perhaps would not be strictly on the list of items in the agenda. These comments were accepted, and I think it is useful for delegations to bring different questions to the attention of the Conference.

We are therefore starting in a very positive light, as confirmed by the inspiring words of foreign minister Moni and the comments of the High Representative, Mr. Sergio Duarte, who highlighted the institutionality of the Conference on Disarmament. It is very much our understanding that the institutional aspect of this body — which is not exactly a forum, but an institutional body — means that this is the sole multilateral negotiating body. It is important to hear that from the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.

I think we can now proceed with our work under your guidance and adopt, as quickly as we adopted the agenda, the programme of work. The programme of work, with the same words or not, as our colleague from Algeria pointed out, has to be adopted promptly, and I think we should not wait long after that to take the practical decisions on its implementation. I stress the word “practical”, and the plural in the word “decisions”, because, whether or not they are in one document, they will be different practical measures that will put into practice the programme of work.

The President: I thank Ambassador de Macedo Soares for his statement. Would any other delegation like to take the floor? That does not seem to be the case. This concludes our business for today. This meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.