
Conference on Disarmament

8 March 2011

English

Final record of the one thousand two hundred and fourteenth plenary meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 8 March 2011, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Pedro Oyarce(Chile)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I call to order the 1214th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. I would like to extend a warm welcome to our guest today, His Excellency Mr. Grigol Vashadze, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Georgia. Your presence here today, Sir, is clear testimony to the importance that your country attaches to the work of this forum and to the multilateral efforts related to disarmament and non-proliferation. I invite you to address the Conference.

Mr. Vashadze (Georgia): It is a privilege and honour to address the Conference on Disarmament, even more so as I started my diplomatic career here in 1981 and was part of the delegation of the Soviet Union until 1988. I would like to recall my teacher and my first ambassador, a brilliant diplomat and brilliant intellectual, Victor Issraelyan, long-term representative of the Soviet Union to the Conference on Disarmament.

It was one of the most important bodies, one of the most important international forums of the 1970s and 1980s, the organization which produced such cornerstone agreements as the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Occasionally we have been distracted from disarmament issues by the shooting down of Korean Air Lines flight 007, Iran Air flight 655, Chernobyl, the Challenger catastrophe ... This world has seen a lot, and I sincerely would like to see this Conference very busy with elaborating a new set of agreements on non-proliferation, on disarmament and restriction of armed forces.

We still have major challenges in the fields of non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control, and they need to be dealt with comprehensively through the combined efforts of the international community. The Conference should exercise a significantly greater influence and produce a larger impact in the field of its competences, especially in view of the current international security environment. To meet this objective, we will all have to spare no effort in order to promote this unique forum for negotiation which played a crucial role in elaborating several major international disarmament and non-proliferation instruments.

In this regard, Georgia welcomes the recent high-level meeting aimed at taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations within the Conference on Disarmament, and we absolutely, 100 per cent support the United Nations Secretary-General's call for action.

The issue of the effectiveness and efficiency of the present set of international treaties and agreements in the field of disarmament has been raised quite frequently. Some States have expressed their view that existing mechanisms are obsolete, may not be perfect, and new ones might be elaborated as soon as possible. Indeed, we should certainly labour together to act when necessary, where necessary and amend when needed. But I would like to emphasize that, while negotiating new instruments aimed at addressing emerging security requirements, special attention should be paid by the international community to making the already agreed mechanisms truly universal.

Moreover, we cannot turn a blind eye to the issue of utmost significance, namely the compliance of the States parties with the obligations imposed upon them by international treaties. Obviously, non-compliance by some of the States in certain areas — let's just remember the quick expansion of the nuclear club — can irreversibly erode the current security system and produce undesired large-scale negative implications.

We also strongly believe that the existing loopholes and flaws are of secondary importance. The primary problem we face in this regard is not always the existence of security concerns, as it is frequently mentioned, quoted and cited by numerous States, but in many cases the lack of political will, first to undertake, then to fully implement the existing commitments and to utilize the mechanism we already have. We are confident that any respective discussion can be realistic and effective only if all States fulfil in good faith the already undertaken commitments and obligations which derive from existing documents

and serve as the building blocks of the existing security architecture. Non-compliance with any of them robs bits of solidity from the current security system.

I would like to stress one particular field which I think represents danger, not only to Georgia but to the whole international community, and this is the question of nuclear terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the related materials and technologies. This problem has become one of the major challenges to our common security. In this regard, full compliance with obligations under the relevant international arrangements, such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the CWC, the Biological Weapons Convention, United Nations Security Council resolution 1540, and so forth, must stand out as one of the main priorities of the international community and of this body.

Bearing in mind the aforementioned, I would like to draw your special attention to the problem of so-called black holes created in Georgia's occupied territories of Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region, where Russia exercises occupying power, exercises effective control. The lack of respective control mechanisms in those territories creates a fertile ground for the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and related materials, as well as the accumulation and illicit transfers of conventional arms – the most advanced ones, I should say. The fact is that in recent years there have been several recorded attempts of nuclear smuggling via the Georgian occupied territories, and this alarming fact further amplifies the sense of danger. These illegal activities were duly prevented by the Georgian law enforcement bodies; we now can register eight attempts. However, it should be emphasized that, in the absence of an international presence in Georgia's occupied territories, it has become virtually impossible to conduct any type of verification activities on the ground and, as a result, the risk of proliferation of chemical, biological, radioactive and nuclear materials and weapons of mass destruction in these occupied regions has tremendously increased.

In addition, as you might be aware, huge amounts of advanced assault weapon systems are being accumulated by Russia in the occupied regions of Georgia, in grave violation of international law, as well as Russia's international commitments, including the ceasefire agreement of 12 August 2008. Georgia undertook a pledge, a legal obligation of non-use of force, on 23 November 2010. Russia's response to this gesture and act of goodwill was to introduce more weapons to the occupied territories, namely anti-aircraft missile system S-300, tactical ballistic missiles (which, by the way, can be equipped with nuclear warhead Tochka-U, also known as Scarab B), 300-millimetre Smerch multiple rocket launchers, and so on. Overall, we have more than 10,000 occupying forces in our two regions, with heavy armaments, but no international control whatsoever.

International control mechanisms cannot be exploited in those territories. There are no guarantees whatsoever that these arms, including the especially dangerous ones, would not be transferred to various terrorists and criminal groups, which would pose a serious threat not only to one particular region but to the whole international community.

We are convinced that an appropriate time has come for the international community to stand up for the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter and other cornerstone documents of international law.

This is the world of new challenges, but also new opportunities. The Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral disarmament forum has the potential to address challenges that confront us. I would like to just mention, for example, one particular issue, cluster bombs. Just think about what damage is caused by these to civilians. There are sufficient instruments at our disposal both for dealing with the threats and for helping realize the opportunities. Without this we will not be able to create a solid system leading to a safer and more united world.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Sir, for your observations and for sharing your experiences, in particular with regard to the challenges that we face. I will suspend the meeting for a few minutes to escort Mr. Vashadze out. We will reconvene immediately.

The meeting was suspended momentarily to allow the President to escort Mr. Vashadze out of the meeting room.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We will resume the meeting. I would like to inform the Conference that, following consultations with the coordinators of the regional groups, as a courtesy, and without setting a precedent, we will give the floor to Ms. Adilia Caravaca, representative of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. Today we would like send our best wishes to all women around the world, particularly for the work they do in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. Their activities in the areas of peace, security and disarmament were highlighted by the General Assembly in its resolution 65/69 of 2010, and also, if you recall, by the Security Council in its resolution 1325 of 2000. These resolutions recognize the valuable contribution of women to specific disarmament measures taken at the local, national, subregional and regional levels to prevent and reduce armed violence and conflict and promote disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. Ms. Caravaca's intervention will, I understand, make reference to the seminar held yesterday to mark International Women's Day, which focused on the implementation of the aforementioned General Assembly resolution 65/69.

Ms. Caravaca (Women's International League for Peace and Freedom) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, we really appreciate the opportunity to address this Conference in plenary meeting for the second year in a row.

(continued in English)

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), talking on behalf of women from around the world, has taken this opportunity to address the Conference on Disarmament on International Women's Day. This day has linked women's engagement in political processes for peace and justice since 1911, celebrating 100 years this year.

Yesterday WILPF organized our annual International Women's Day seminar on disarmament here at the United Nations in Geneva. This year the seminar focused on United Nations General Assembly resolution 65/69, on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, which was adopted without a vote in 2010. Participants discussed the importance of including the "women, peace and security" agenda on the international security agenda in general, and on the disarmament and arms control agenda in particular. This approach has received increased attention during recent years, but the international security community often ignores or leaves aside the importance of gender in discussions on disarmament.

We had speakers from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Costa Rica, Pakistan and the United Kingdom, who all highlighted the linkages between women, peace and security and disarmament in their national and regional contexts. They emphasized the problems that ever-increasing militarism causes for human security and for women in particular.

United Nations Security Council resolution 1325, on women, peace and security, clearly highlights the importance of women's participation at all levels of decision-making in the sphere of peace and security. However, women's participation in international disarmament and arms control negotiations is still very low, and the negotiations too often tend to ignore the importance of women's participation and experiences. The consequence

is biased outcomes, with a disproportional and narrow focus on the experiences of a very limited number of men.

In addition to the Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security, the Beijing Platform for Action of 1995 in its focus area E specifically addresses the importance of including a gender perspective in disarmament policies. It recommends that States “undertake to explore new ways of generating new public and private financial resources, inter alia, through the appropriate reduction of excessive military expenditures, including global military expenditures, trade in arms and investment for arms production and acquisition, taking into consideration national security requirements, so as to permit the possible allocation of additional funds for social and economic development, in particular for the advancement of women”.

Sixteen years after the Beijing Platform for Action, the international arms trade is still big business. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute estimates that the value of the annual global arms trade as of 2007 was about US\$ 50.5 billion. The five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council account for about 76 per cent of the arms sold each year. Despite the global economic crisis, global military expenditure has continued to increase, totalling US\$ 1.5 trillion in 2009. In addition to this, huge investments in the modernization of nuclear arsenals are being planned around the world.

As the weapons spread, so does their use. Armed conflict, war, terrorism and occupation are cause and consequence to the ever-increasing levels of militarism and military spending around the world. While military expenditure increases, investment in conflict resolution, peacebuilding and development lags far behind. Armed conflict and excessive militarism prevent economic stability and sustainable livelihoods and absorb vast amounts of funding that could otherwise be spent on human security, including the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Funds reserved for development initiatives are increasingly spent on emergency relief and rehabilitation operations to clean up after violent conflict. The high level of militarism is also inextricably linked to the reported human rights violations and the failure of peace processes.

This is why WILPF believes that each disarmament measure must make a contribution to preventing armed conflicts, preventing the violation of human rights and international humanitarian law, and seriously reducing the culture and economy of militarism.

In a world of increasing economic inequalities and political instabilities, shrinking natural resources and environmental deterioration, weapons continue to be tools of violence and oppression for those who use them and tools of financial gain for those who make and sell them. The Conference on Disarmament must help realize the mandate of Article 26 of the United Nations Charter, which demands “the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security with the least diversion for armaments of the world’s human and economic resources” through “the establishment of a system for the regulation of armaments”. Right now, negotiations on an arms trade treaty are ongoing at the United Nations General Assembly, but Article 26 goes beyond the mere regulation of the arms trade to the regulation of armaments themselves. It foresees a redirection of military expenditure, implying that the system of regulation will afford security by other means.

The Conference on Disarmament should have been contributing to this objective throughout its history, but instead it has remained deadlocked for more than a decade, and no progress on its four core issues has taken place. The Conference on Disarmament must return to work, and when it does, it must recognize that in reality it only has one core issue: disarmament.

For example, if the Conference on Disarmament is to negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile material, it must lay the groundwork for complete, verifiable and

irreversible nuclear disarmament. And in order to achieve a treaty that would meet the needs and expectations of the international community, all nuclear weapon possessors should immediately cease and rescind their plans for the modernization, replacement, refurbishment and upgrading of nuclear arsenals, complexes, facilities and delivery systems, and cease production of fissile material for military purposes.

People all over the world are expecting the nuclear weapon possessors to deliver concrete disarmament measures in line with their commitments. If the fissile material treaty is to be a credible step in an approach to a world free of nuclear weapons, it will have to include provisions for the next step on that road, a nuclear weapons convention. A simple cut-off that will do little more than keep the status quo will not be able to meet the demands for prevention of armed conflict, prevention of the violation of human rights and international humanitarian law, and reduction of the culture and economy of militarism. The Conference on Disarmament is not mandated to maintain the status quo, it is mandated to negotiate multilateral disarmament treaties. It is thus in fact mandated to change the status quo.

In its report dating from 2006, the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission emphasized the importance of gender in negotiations on weapons of mass destruction. It concluded that “armament policies and the use of armed force have often been influenced by misguided ideas about masculinity and strength. An understanding of and emancipation from this traditional perspective might help to remove some of the hurdles on the road to disarmament and non-proliferation.” My advice to you today, distinguished delegates, is to keep this in mind in order to get past the stalemate of the Conference on Disarmament and fulfil your mandate.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Are there any delegations that would like to make any comments at this time? If not, I would like to reiterate our thanks to Ms. Caravaca, and, in accordance with the timetable, we will begin our discussion, which I hope will be as focused as possible, of the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

The discussion of this issue held on 8 February under the presidency of Canada demonstrates, in my opinion, the widely shared interest in ensuring the sustainability of the peaceful uses of outer space. This shared interest is ever more essential for the work and socioeconomic development of all humanity. It is clear that the issue is not restricted solely to those that have space capabilities. Despite legitimate differences of opinion on this subject, there is a shared perception regarding the need to enhance the legal and international framework that governs activities in outer space.

Among the key areas identified in this debate, it is worth mentioning the following: transparency and confidence-building measures as a necessary step to make space activities safe, the European Union’s draft code of conduct, General Assembly resolution 65/68 and the Group of Governmental Experts established by this resolution. We also have the Canadian proposal of principles contained in document CD/1865 to consider. These contributions should be considered; however, as has been stated repeatedly, the guidelines contained in them are voluntary and thus cannot replace a binding legal instrument. With regard to binding initiatives, some proposals have been made or mentioned: the proposal by certain countries in document CD/1779 on possible elements for an instrument, and the draft treaty proposed by China and the Russian Federation, which is also provided in a document. In addition, we should bear in mind other considerations related to our working definitions for outer space, space weapons, anti-satellite weapons, space attacks and tests, and the issue of verification. Another interesting aspect that has also been mentioned is the strengthening of coordination between the Conference, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, and the International Telecommunication Union. General Assembly resolution 65/44 contains a reference to these issues and invites the Conference to establish a working group as soon as possible during its 2011 session. This text reiterates that this

forum, in its capacity as the sole multilateral body for negotiations on disarmament, plays a key role in the negotiation, as appropriate, of multilateral agreements on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

We hope that you can discuss some of these elements in a detailed and more focused way so that the Conference will continue to contribute at least to a preliminary debate on these points.

Mr. Macedo Soares (Brazil): Mr. President, outer space is a subject that has been present on the disarmament and international security agenda since 1959, when the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, which you just mentioned, and which is an offspring of Sputnik, was established, though the aim of the Committee is not to deal with weapons in outer space but with the peaceful use of it. The risk that the arms race could be extended to outer space led States to include the item on the agenda of the General Assembly in 1981, and since then, the full membership of the United Nations has discussed and voted on more than 30 resolutions on preventing an arms race in outer space.

The issue was included on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament in 1981, when it received the mandate of the General Assembly, through resolution 36/99, to conclude “an appropriate international treaty ... to prevent the spread of the arms race to outer space” and “embark on negotiations with a view to achieving agreement on the text of such a treaty”. The pressure to deal substantively with this subject has been mounting with the increased occupation of outer space. The world has become more and more dependent on satellite services, which are vital to the global economy. The growing use of outer space, including military activities, and the progressive increase in the number of orbiting devices has been accompanied by accidents and resulting debris that threaten the integrity of satellites, and by the testing of anti-satellite weapons.

With these concerns in mind, the General Assembly last year adopted resolution 65/44, which invited the Conference on Disarmament to “establish a working group under its agenda item entitled ‘Prevention of an arms race in outer space’ as early as possible during its 2011 session”. Brazil expects the Conference on Disarmament to adopt its programme of work as soon as possible, with the inclusion of a working group, which could work along the lines of the mandates contained either in document CD/1864, paragraph 3, or in document CD/1889, paragraph 1 (c).

Another resolution on space security was also adopted by the General Assembly last year, with only one abstention. Resolution 65/68, on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space, was tabled by the Russian Federation and co-sponsored by Brazil and more than 50 other delegations. It establishes a group of governmental experts “to conduct a study, commencing in 2012, on outer space transparency and confidence-building measures”. When it convenes next year, the group will represent the first concrete measure in more than a decade to deal with space security in the context of the United Nations since a similar group was established in 1991, for a two-year period, by resolution 45/55.

It is regrettable that the Conference on Disarmament has not been able to agree so far on the establishment of a subsidiary body on the prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS). It is ironic that, according to the mandate given by resolution 65/68, the group on transparency and confidence-building measures may take into account, among other elements, “substantive discussions on the prevention of arms race in outer space within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament”.

It is worth noting that establishing a subsidiary body in the Conference to discuss PAROS does not imply nuclear disarmament or, as a matter of fact, any disarmament at all. It simply implies that outer space cannot be used for placement of weapons. An instrument with that purpose would only be a legally binding preventive regulation to ensure that outer

space does not become a battlefield. Preventing an arms race in outer space means, in fact, the creation of a weapons-free zone.

Brazil has expressed many times, as have also an overwhelming majority of member States, that the Conference should negotiate a legally binding instrument on PAROS. Such a treaty should be ample enough not to interfere with unimpeded peaceful use of outer space, but, on the other hand, sufficiently clear to ban the placement of weapons and the use of satellites as weapons and prohibit any sort of attack on devices in orbit. The concrete proposal put forward by China and the Russian Federation, the draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against outer space objects, circulated as document CD/1839 in 2008, is an initial contribution, a framework that may constitute a basis for work.

Transparency and confidence-building measures cannot replace a legal instrument. They aim at helping lower tensions, and would not concretely deal with the threat of placement of weapons in outer space. If a State cannot commit itself to a legal instrument, it consequently increases mistrust. Confidence, which is based, among other things, on transparency, is like water – essential but not sufficient.

Brazil, like the great majority of the members of the Conference — and I would say that we are very close to unanimity — favours the establishment of a subsidiary body on PAROS. There is widespread support for the mandates proposed in documents CD/1864 and CD/1889. Both documents mandate substantive discussions, the main difference being that CD/1889 does not exclude the possibility of multilateral negotiations.

Why the opposition to discussing substantially the question of a treaty? The only answer seems to be the strategic need to keep open the option of an arms race in outer space. One can say, without undue pessimism, that if that option is kept open, an arms race in outer space is likely to happen sooner or later. It is our duty to prevent that sad and dangerous outcome.

Mr. Wang Qun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Mr. President, China already expressed its principled views on the prevention of an arms race in outer space at the plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament on 8 February. China takes note of the statement made at the 1 March plenary meeting by the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Sergey Lavrov, on the work of the Conference on Disarmament, in which he emphasized that the prevention of an arms race in outer space is one of the priority issues in the current work of the Conference and expressed his expectation that the various parties would begin substantive work as soon as possible on the new draft treaty on outer space submitted by China and the Russian Federation. China fully endorses this viewpoint. The draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space, the threat or use of force against outer space objects, which China and Russia jointly submitted to the Conference on Disarmament in 2008, has laid the groundwork for establishing a possible legal instrument. The draft is an important outcome that was achieved step by step through the cumulative work of many years in the Conference on Disarmament and has received quite broad approval and support. In recent years, thanks to steadfast efforts by China, the Russian Federation and other parties, many important issues related to the treaty have been further clarified, such as definitions, scope and verification, and consensus on relevant issues is growing steadily. Currently, the vast majority of countries in the international community support or accept the draft. Hence, the Conference on Disarmament should begin substantive work on this basis as soon as possible.

We have also taken note of the many proposals on transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs) in outer space put forward by the parties concerned. The relevant resolution adopted last year by the United Nations General Assembly also calls for the establishment of a United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on TCBMs in outer

space. China expects that the work of the Group of Governmental Experts will help to carry forward negotiations on a legal instrument on outer space, refine the legal regime governing outer space, and safeguard outer space security. China will pay close attention to the views expressed by the parties during this discussion and will make further observations at the appropriate time.

Mr. Kwon (Republic of Korea): The Korean delegation attaches importance to the discussion on the prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS). There seems to be a broad consensus that the existing outer space framework needs some improvement in order to address any loopholes.

First of all, over the past 50 years after the signing of the Outer Space Treaty, in addition to the effort to build a comprehensive architecture on outer space activities, we have also sought ways to promote universal adherence to, and to ensure full compliance with, the existing agreements and arrangements, such as the Registration Convention and the Hague Code of Conduct, by spacefaring nations. We can see the progress made through the increased number of States parties to those agreements and the raised awareness among States of the obligations they need to fulfil in outer space activities.

Secondly, transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs) are highly important elements to ensure multilateral cooperation for the peaceful uses of outer space. There is an urgent call to build up transparency and confidence among major powers when it comes to the use of outer space, both in the absence and in the presence of strategic motives, including the pre-notification of any launch or test of objects in outer space. In this regard, we take note of the endorsement of the Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines by the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution 62/217. My delegation also appreciates the approval of a draft code of conduct for outer space activities by the European Council in 2008, as a concrete effort to enhance TCBMs.

Lastly, with regard to efforts to seek a new legally binding instrument, my Government welcomes the draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space, the threat or use of force against outer space objects put forward by the Russian Federation and China as a meaningful basis for discussions in the Conference. My delegation believes the draft treaty will contribute to our exploration of the complex and abstract concepts related to outer space. In this regard, we look forward to starting the review of the draft to get a clearer picture of the member States' various views on the issue.

Regarding these three approaches, I would like to emphasize that they are not mutually exclusive and need to be explored in a balanced and simultaneous way. Indeed, I would like to remind you that we have already seen meaningful progress on all three approaches. We cannot dismiss any one of those three approaches. We believe that a pragmatic and step-by-step approach in each of these three areas is a viable option at this stage.

The unwavering commitment of the Republic of Korea to the peaceful uses of outer space rests on its conviction that progress on this new frontier will be of lasting benefit to humankind. To this end we will continue to facilitate international cooperation and support the work of the Conference.

In addition, given the implications of PAROS for the peaceful and cooperative use of outer space, and the active discussion already taking place in various international frameworks, we will be able to realize maximum synergies with relevant international forums sharing their respective expertise and experience. In this regard, my delegation would like to emphasize the importance of close cooperation and enhanced dialogue with those forums, such as the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, the First and Fourth Committees of the United Nations General Assembly, and the International Telecommunication Union.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): My delegation welcomes this opportunity to discuss the issue of the prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS), which has been on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament since 1982.

It is in the common interest of all humanity to explore and use outer space for peaceful purposes. The United Nations Charter obligates us not to use, or threaten to use, force in international relations. That obligation includes Member States' activities in space. Weaponization of outer space is not science fiction. It is a growing and distinct possibility. Weapons in space would intensify conflicts on Earth; therefore, measures to prevent an arms race in outer space would help avoid a grave danger to global peace and security.

The Conference on Disarmament, the sole disarmament negotiating forum, has the primary responsibility to negotiate and conclude a multilateral treaty or treaties on PAROS. In the view of the vast majority of the United Nations membership, space security is an imperative, not an option. Space must remain a weapon-free zone, a zone of peace, and the only way to ensure this is to prevent its militarization and weaponization. The existing regime on outer space has numerous shortcomings, which can only be filled by a new legal instrument. We have consistently argued that the time is ripe, indeed overripe, for focused discussions and negotiations on PAROS. The United Nations General Assembly, in the past years, through its resolution 65/44, has stated that the Conference on Disarmament has the primary responsibility in the negotiations for prevention of an arms race in outer space. Certain other States, which remain averse to negotiations under this agenda item, should convey their reservations more openly and tell us how multilateral action in this vital area would run counter to their interests.

As regards the proposals containing codes of conduct or transparency and confidence-building measures, I wish to reiterate our position that these are useful interim measures but cannot and should not obviate the quest for a legally binding treaty on PAROS in the Conference on Disarmament.

The proposal made by Russia and China provides a good basis to start work on this issue in the Conference.

Mr. Ri Jang Gon (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Outer space is the common property of humankind and an inseparable sphere for its future development. The exploration and use of outer space, including the Moon and other celestial bodies, for peaceful purposes should be carried out in accordance with the interests of all countries, irrespective of their degree of economic and technological development.

The Outer Space Treaty stipulates that "outer space shall be free for exploration and use by all States without discrimination of any kind, on a basis of equality and in accordance with international law".

Accordingly, all States, in line with the policy of development and peaceful use of outer space, have a legitimate right to research, develop and utilize outer space with their own strength and technologies.

Outer space should not be the field of contest for military supremacy of a certain country. Furthermore, space science and technology should not be developed and used as an instrument to violate security and interfere in the internal affairs of other countries. The valuable successes of science and technology created by mankind should not be used as a means to threaten the existence of humankind, rather to serve the development and welfare of humankind.

However, there exists a potential danger of armed confrontation and war in outer space because of attempts by a superpower to militarize it. Regrettably, outer space is going to be turned into an area where the results of advanced science and technology and huge amounts of funds are used for the purpose of military strategy. The plans are openly carried

on to militarize outer space and incite an arms race. Tests of space weapons are conducted and even the manufacturing of space weapons and spacecrafts aimed at rapid attack on ground targets is pursued.

A typical example is the attempt by a superpower over the years to develop a missile defence system combined with space weapons under the pretext of the threats of ballistic missiles from the other. If we allow it to justify and push ahead with its military actions under the pretext of others' threat, the peace and security of the world cannot be secured. Rather, it will compel other countries to further strengthen their self-defence.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea remains unchanged in its position to oppose space militarization. In the past years, the international community has directed its efforts to accomplish the goal of the prevention of an arms race in outer space and militarization of it. As a result, several instruments and some important resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly related to the prevention of an arms race in outer space were adopted. However, my delegation is of the view that the existing legal regimes alone cannot prevent the placement of weapons and an arms race in outer space comprehensively and effectively.

Establishment of a new legal framework for comprehensive and effective prevention of an arms race in outer space is an urgent matter in the light of the fact that some important arrangements relevant to prohibition of deployment of weapons in outer space were either abolished or not implemented. Comprehensive prohibition and removal of the threat of an arms race in outer space are essential to ensure the peaceful uses of it for all States and maintain world peace and security.

My delegation views it as vital to establish a new international legal instrument for comprehensive and effective prevention of an arms race in outer space within the Conference on Disarmament. In this regard, my delegation appreciates the joint draft treaty by the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China on prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space, the threat or use of force against outer space objects. It is the view of my delegation that the draft can serve as a basis for negotiation. We regard it as an initiative to positively contribute to prevent an arms race in outer space and promote world peace and security in view of its aim and purport. In this context, my delegation supports the proposal to establish an ad hoc committee on the prevention of an arms race in outer space and to start negotiations on this issue.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to reiterate the position of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to oppose the deployment of any kind of space weapons and welcome and support initiatives to prevent space militarization.

Mr. Hoffmann (Germany): Before I come to my statement, can I say how much we welcome that the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom had an opportunity today to present its views to the Conference? I think it is healthy to listen to statements taking a broader look at questions of disarmament and its complex links with other pressing issues.

Now, on the prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS), allow me to make at the outset a procedural remark. While, in view of the importance of the matter, we certainly welcome the opportunity to discuss the question of PAROS today, we would much prefer it if this issue could be taken up in the framework of an agreed programme of work, that is to say, within a proper working group or an ad hoc committee, which such an important matter definitely deserves.

I wish to remind us of the fact that, in the programme of work (document CD/1864) presented to the Conference by the Algerian presidency and adopted by consensus on 29 May 2009, the establishment of a working group on the prevention of an arms race in outer

space was foreseen. The mandate for the working group envisaged discussing substantively, without limitation, all issues “related to an arms race in outer space”. In a later draft programme of work presented by the Brazilian presidency on 6 July 2010 — that is, document CD/1889, which my delegation endorsed — an element was added to the effect that such discussion would not exclude the possibility of multilateral negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament.

I mention this to remind us of the fact that we are not here only to engage in discussions on the relevant issues on the international disarmament and arms control agenda, but actually to negotiate and conclude binding agreements and instruments which can make a meaningful contribution towards strengthening peace and international security.

It is therefore our expectation that intensive efforts will continue to agree a programme of work allowing the Conference to actually start its substantive work.

With respect to the substance of the matter, it should be borne in mind that the international community began to include on its agenda the item of the prevention of an arms race in outer space already in the 1950s.

In view of the experience mankind had had with the devastating effects of arms races on Earth, it is surely not difficult to understand why the objective of preventing a development in which even space would become an arena of an ever more accelerated arms race found and continues to find much support around the globe.

The stupendous technological developments regarding the use of space since the 1950s have only helped to strengthen the widely held conviction not only that more rules of the road are required for proper management of space so as to ensure it remains a global commons, but that existing arms control regimes in outer space should be strengthened as well.

As we are all aware, this is a complicated matter, not least because there are so many stakeholders when it comes to the use of space.

Today, space is, of course, used for a huge variety of civilian purposes, purposes which are of immense relevance for the functioning of modern societies, and it is clear that this will increase even further in the future. There are competent bodies dealing with policy and regulatory issues arising from this enormous challenge with a view to ensuring that the fundamental right of all States to explore and use outer space is fully guaranteed.

The issue is further compounded by the fact that there is a great degree of overlap of civilian and military uses of space. It is in this field where, for instance, confidence- and security-building measures could do much to mitigate risks and dangers. In this regard, the European Union has been working actively on a draft code of conduct for outer space activities, a project which Germany fully supports.

In view of its remit, the focus of the Conference on Disarmament must be on the dangers to peace and international security posed by the placement of weapons in outer space, the so-called weaponization of space.

The cornerstone of international space law is the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, which does place important constraints on military activity in space in banning the deployment of weapons of mass destruction in space as well as military activity on the Moon and other celestial bodies.

It is rather doubtful whether the deployment of weapons of mass destruction in space was an imminent scenario or threat in the 1960s. But even today, we should be grateful to those who had the foresight and wisdom to nip in the bud any later potential temptations to even think of or explore such scenarios or options.

Today, we have to look in other directions because, important as it is, the Outer Space Treaty has only a limited substantive range in that it does not contain anything about the issue of a potential non-weapons-of-mass-destruction weaponization of outer space.

Together with the overwhelming majority of United Nations Member States, Germany has declared itself clearly against deploying any kind of weapon in outer space.

Now, when we hear the argument that a weaponization of space, or, for that matter, an arms race in space, is actually a non-issue, because allegedly no such efforts or dangers exist in reality, our response is this: naturally, we are pleased to take note of such expressions of faith or such assurances, but if there are indeed no such dangers, why should it then not be possible to have a serious conversation about actually banning any such attempts in a binding agreement, just to be on the safe side, so to speak? This was the underlying wise principle not only of the Outer Space Treaty but of other treaties as well, such as the Antarctic Treaty of 1957 or the Seabed Treaty of 1971.

Against this background, the German delegation welcomed the introduction of the draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against outer space objects by Russia and China in 2008. We have made our contribution to its discussion in this chamber, inter alia pointing out elements where it clearly needed to be worked on, like the issue of verification, to name just one.

Let me underline in conclusion: the prevention of an arms race in outer space and the need to prevent outer space from becoming an area of conflict are essential conditions for the strengthening of peace and international security. It is our hope that, as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, the Conference on Disarmament will eventually play its role in this regard.

The German delegation stands ready to make its contribution.

Mr. Vasiliev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Mr. President, before turning to the topic currently under discussion, I would like to make some points.

I shall begin with something positive and would like to send my heartfelt greetings to our distinguished female colleagues here in this hall on the occasion of International Women's Day and wish them happiness, joy and, of course, love. I am compelled to express my regret that this year I was unable to repeat last year's experiment and give everyone flowers, but I hope that my initiative will be backed by colleagues in the future and that we will celebrate this holiday.

The second matter is undoubtedly more practical: namely, that there has been a proposal to discuss the possibility of participation by NGOs in the work of our forum with a view to reaching some kind of decision. Mr. Lavrov, Minister for Foreign Affairs, conveyed in his statement last week the Russian Federation's readiness for NGOs to take part in the work of our forum. Previous examples of this have been their involvement in the work of the First Committee and the review processes of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, for instance.

Another point that I would like to bring to your attention concerns a more unfortunate matter and was prompted by the statement of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Georgia. It was not very pleasant to hear familiar and time-worn statements about the so-called current occupation of Georgian territory by Russia, especially given that last Friday, 4 March, saw the completion of the fifteenth round of the Geneva discussions on the Caucasus, at which the issues of non-use of force and security relations between Georgia, Abkhazia and South Ossetia were taken up.

With respect to the substance of some of the Minister's comments, I would like in particular to note his comment that Georgian border guards had prevented eight attempts to

move radioactive material through Georgia. As far as I understand — and this ensues from the statement by the representative of Georgia — Georgia does not have control over the territory of either Abkhazia or Ossetia. Thus, all these attempts occurred in Georgia itself and, if there is such a concern, then Georgia should probably appeal to the international community to help it to establish due control over the radioactive material in its territory. If among the Georgian population there are people involved in these matters, they should probably be brought to justice.

The second part of the statement by the representative of Georgia concerned the placement of Russian military bases in Abkhazia and Ossetia. However, in international practice it is normal for military bases to be located in foreign States, as they are in Europe, in the Mediterranean and in the waters of the Indian Ocean, the Pacific Ocean and the Korean peninsula. And I think that the quantity of weapons and armed forces deployed in those places far exceeds that of the forces deployed in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

It was said that tens of thousands of servicemen were located in these countries. I have information that there are 3,400 servicemen in South Ossetia and 3,463 in Abkhazia. Thus, by my mathematical calculations, we have fewer than 7,000 servicemen. We do not hide these facts. Moreover, we have agreed to submit this information, and information on weapons and types of weapons, in May in the framework of the global exchange of military information provided for by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Now, to close this topic, just as the Minister most likely had stated on a personal note, as fate would have it, Mr. Vashadze and I began our careers in the same department, which dealt with promoting the important idea of a comprehensive system of international security. I think that we would listen with great pleasure to specific proposals from the Georgian delegation on how we can strengthen that comprehensive system of international security, including such principles as equal and indivisible security.

As far as the topic of today's meeting, the issue of space, is concerned, we have had many meetings recently where we discussed general approaches by States to space security. Today we heard an excellent account of what had been done in this area by the distinguished representative of Brazil, Mr. Macedo Soares, and just now by Ambassador Hoffmann of Germany. I shall not repeat these and other statements or the statement of my esteemed colleague from China, Ambassador Wang Qun, who focused on the fact that in February 2008 Russia and China jointly introduced a draft treaty on prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space, which was circulated as document CD/1839.

Even the current discussion shows — and today we already heard remarks concerning the need for such an agreement — that there are certain gaps in international legal practice that point to the need for us to adopt an agreement prohibiting the use of weapons of any kind in outer space.

In his statement, Mr. Hoffmann touched on one aspect of the potential difficulties of such an agreement, and these arguments have been heard in other statements, particularly concerning the verifiability of the agreement. I would like to elaborate further on this aspect in my statement today.

In 2006, the Russian Federation and China jointly presented document CD/1781 of 22 May, entitled "Verification aspects of PAROS", which set out our specific proposals concerning how such an agreement could be verified. I would like to highlight some of its elements. To enable me to be more vivid, allow me to switch into English.

(continued in English)

Some of the elements of the document that has been presented by China and Russia (CD/1781) addressed the question of verification aspects. In theory, it would be possible to set up verification regimes for certain arms control and disarmament legal instruments

already in existence. However, owing to technical, financial or other difficulties, such verification regimes have not been established in reality. Even so, the relevant legal instruments are still effective and binding, playing their positive roles. Belonging to this category are the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, the 1979 Moon Agreement, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, the Seabed Treaty and other treaties. States parties to the Biological Weapons Convention concluded the Convention before beginning negotiations on a verification protocol.

As a matter of fact, among 21 legal instruments listed by the United Nations as multilateral arms regulation and disarmament agreements, a majority do not have a verification regime so far. The same actually applies not only to multilateral agreements, the same also applies to bilateral agreements, and when those agreements were concluded, there was no doubt about verification procedures. For example, some bilateral arms control agreements between the United States and the former Soviet Union restricted, to some extent, the use and the deployment of weapons of special kinds in outer space. For example, article IX, paragraph 1, of the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms, known as SALT II, of 1979, prescribed that the two parties undertake not to develop, test or deploy systems for placing into the Earth's orbit nuclear weapons or any other kind of weapons of mass destruction, including fractional orbital missiles. The provisions had a positive role in forbidding the deployment and the use of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons in the Earth's orbit. However, they did not prohibit the deployment or the use of weapons of other kinds in the Earth's orbit, and, as we know, this agreement expired in 1985. The Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty of 1972 required the parties not to develop, test or deploy space-based anti-missile systems. The Treaty became null and invalid when the United States withdrawal decision entered into force on 13 June 2002.

Besides those, of course, the document I quoted on the verification aspects of the prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS) contains some examples of how PAROS provisions or PPW provisions can be verified. They can be verified by remote sensing survey – outer-space-to-outer-space survey, which means using satellites to monitor the activities of outer space objects; outer-space-to-Earth survey, which refers to, for example, using satellites to monitor activities of space vehicles on the Earth and in the Earth's atmosphere; and Earth-to-outer-space survey, which means, for example, using ground-based facilities to monitor the activities of outer space targets.

There are also proposals on possible on-site inspection, and those proposals are contained in different proposals, both by the Russian Federation and China, on transparency and confidence-building measures. Some of the same elements are contained in the proposed European code of conduct: inspections of relevant space research laboratories on the ground to find out whether or not research on weapons intended to be deployed in outer space or weapons targeting outer space objects intended to be deployed is going on; and verification of objects intended to be launched on space rockets, and of launching sites to see whether there are weapons on the ground.

Besides the verification proposals I just referred to, there were other proposals made by several States in various forums. For example, there was a proposal establishing an international satellite monitoring agency to verify the observance of certain bilateral arms control agreements and to monitor a crisis situation; it was proposed by France at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Seeking satisfactory verification measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space and concluding direct international verification, including on-site verification under any possible circumstances, was a proposal made by Sweden in 1985. Setting up a PaxSat satellite system to conduct verification through the space-based remote sensing survey was a proposal of Canada in 1984, and actually in 2006 — I refer to the Russian/Chinese

document — the Canadian delegation issued its own document CD/1785 of 21 June 2006, which actually was devoted to space-based verification and explained: “The ‘Paxsat A’ concept — a contraction for ‘Peace Satellite’ — was developed by Canadian diplomats and industrialists to verify international agreements banning weapons from outer space. The Paxsat A study — ‘A Study of the Feasibility of a Spacecraft-Based System to Determine the Presence of Weapons in Space’ — asked a fundamental question, ‘Can space observations determine the role or function of an object in space?’” And — once again I quote — “The answer was a qualified yes.” So we see that there were different studies already undertaken by various agencies, institutions and governments in order to address the question of verification. Of course, we also can address this further down, during our deliberations here in the Conference.

So the most important thing to do at present is to reach a consensus in the form of a legal commitment and legal instrument on the prevention of the weaponization of an arms race in outer space. In order to facilitate early achievement of such consensus, it may be advisable to put verification, as well as other potential contentious issues, aside for the time being. With the development of science and technology, the addition of a verification protocol to the proposed treaty may be considered in the future when conditions are ripe.

The question can also be viewed from another angle: the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, which was referred to by some delegations, although without a verification mechanism, is both important and effective. However, the 1967 Treaty does have a serious loophole in the form of not covering weapons other than weapons of mass destruction. No efforts are being made towards a new outer space treaty with the purpose of plugging that loophole. If the new treaty could have a reliable and effective verification regime, that would be ideal. Nevertheless, following the 1967 Treaty, even without verification provisions, the envisaged new outer space treaty would still serve its purpose.

Those were my contributions to some compilations on the verification aspects of PAROS, and I just want to conclude my statement by making some specific proposals on how we can proceed in our deliberations here in the Conference. Of course, we already had a lot of general statements about the need for PPWT or PAROS in broader terms, so maybe it is high time for us to concentrate on practical steps and practical elements of a possible treaty. The aim of the treaty is placed in the system of international space legislation, terms and definitions, the real need for them and what they might possibly contain, the scope and basic obligations of the countries, the use of outer space for peaceful and other purposes, transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities, and so on and so forth.

Mr. Hernández Basave (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, the Mexican delegation of course supports the beginning of immediate negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on the important issue of the prevention of an arms race in space. However, we have requested the floor today in order to welcome the statement made by Ms. Caravaca of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, and also to welcome a positive development regarding the Conference, namely, that it seems to be moving towards the view that, rather than excluding women and civil society from our deliberations and negotiations, it is worthwhile to include them in our work. Mr. President, you have been very quick and efficient as always, so I would like to ask if I may make my statement now or should do it later. I would be grateful if you could indicate when I can make my statement.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): You may do so now.

Mr. Hernández Basave (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Mr. President. First of all, we would like to echo the other delegations and express our heartfelt congratulations to the women present here and to all the women in the world. In reality, the

congratulations should be aimed at the international community. This type of celebration does not fall on deaf ears. It promotes causes around the world, promotes awareness and better understanding of, in this case, the important role of that women play, have played and will continue to play in the creation of a better world, in building a better world and, for our purposes, a world that is free of arms and more inclined to peace. We feel that the contributions that civil society can provide to the debate and to our understanding of the problems surrounding the issues of disarmament and security will give us a broader, multisectoral and cross-cutting view, which is essential for conceptualizing multilateralism in the twenty-first century. We would like to thank members of civil society for the opportunities they offer for the exchange of ideas, which unfortunately to date have taken place outside of this Conference, and also for the pressure that they exert, which helps us to be more accountable to our citizens on the issue of disarmament. We hope that some day, some day very soon, the Conference on Disarmament will be able to do some substantive work, that is to say, negotiating work. We hope that when disarmament negotiations are able to proceed, whether within or outside the Conference, we will have contributions and direct and active participation by civil-society organizations in the negotiations.

The Mexican delegation would like to express particular appreciation to the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom for its tenacity and fortitude in the face of the passivity that is seen in the Conference, as well as for their daily awareness-raising work via their periodical *Reaching Critical Will*. Mexico attaches great importance to promoting and supporting the empowerment of women and recognizes the need for their participation in the disarmament agenda and the search for peace. Therefore, Mexico supports the inclusion of this issue on the agenda of the First Committee by the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly, and we therefore support resolution 65/69 entitled "Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control".

On this International Women's Day we would like to share with the members of the Conference that in 2001 Mexico established the National Institute for Women, which operates in the framework of the National Programme for Equality between Women and Men, which covers the period 2009 to 2012. It is a special programme that provides basic objectives and lines of action to safeguard women's human rights, such as the right to non-discrimination, access to justice and security, as well as strengthening women's capacity to use their economic agenda to enhance opportunities for their well-being and development.

In 2007 Mexico also adopted the General Act on Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence, which represents a priority issue for Mexico, since the prevention of violence is vital for achieving peace, the ultimate objective of the Conference on Disarmament.

As Mexican Nobel Peace Prize laureate Alfonso García Robles, who was a member of this Conference when we could still elicit Nobel Prizes for the work carried out here, stated in his Nobel Prize acceptance speech, there is an organic relationship between peace and disarmament. Disarmament should be seen not as an end in itself but as a tool to achieve security in equal measure for the men and women of our planet.

Mr. President, we would like to thank you for the work that you have done. We would also like to congratulate the women who represent their countries at all levels in the Conference on Disarmament. We hope that your numbers will continue to increase, both here and in all international bodies, and that people will understand that without women, and without civil society, we will not be able to make real progress in building a better world.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Ambassador, for your thoughts on this special day. I would also like express thanks for the contributions made by women to the work of this Conference.

Mr. Suda (Japan): I am so sorry for asking you for the floor at the end of this session, Mr. President. I asked for the floor just to put some questions about simply procedural matters. I have been a bit puzzled by the procedure of how to conduct the order of the speakers in the past weeks.

I think that for the convenience of all of us it is better for us to know who is going to speak and who intervenes in the process of the order of the speakers. But today, for instance, we knew of only four speakers on the list at the outset, and we have not been told who are the additional speakers during this session, and we noticed only the Mexican Permanent Representative raised his nameplate, so we knew he was going to speak sometime, but we did not know when he would take the floor because we didn't know at all who would be the additional speakers.

So my suggestion is that we would like to ask the President to consider that the list of speakers should be announced at the outset, but at the same time additional speakers should also be announced from time to time, particularly when somebody raises their nameplate to indicate they would like to speak. Then we can know who is going to speak and in which order, and I think that would help us in promoting interactive discussion at this session.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you for your suggestion, Ambassador. We have taken note of it, but at the start of today's meeting there were only two delegations on the list. The others were added in the course of the debate. That is the essence of interactivity. I wish there could be more, but in any case, each time we will consider indicating who is being added to the list, as the Ambassador of Canada did and as I have sometimes done.

Mr. Daryaei (Islamic Republic of Iran): I also take the floor to thank the distinguished representative of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. It was a great pleasure for us to listen to the intervention and wise monitoring of the work of the Conference. We would very much appreciate it if there were also other opportunities to hear from civil society on disarmament. I think it will give us some vision to see things "out of the box". So, if you allow me, Mr. President, I would like to express special thanks to the representative of the NGO who raised the issue.

From my point of view, we have to take into account the four main points in her statement, which reminds us that nuclear disarmament is the only one core issue that we have to stick to. So we have to bear that in mind. We also have to bear in mind that we are here to negotiate to change the status quo. I think that is also good advice. So we have to start negotiation in such a manner as to contribute to a safer and more prosperous world. The aim is total elimination of all nuclear weapons. She also emphasized the nuclear weapons convention. I think this is a very important concept. We already elaborated on seven elements in the statement by our Foreign Minister related to the nuclear weapons convention. We welcome any other proposal which might be included in the nuclear weapons convention. And the fourth issue which is important, I think, is that when we want to negotiate a fissile material cut-off treaty, it should be a disarmament treaty, so it should move in a direction that changes the status quo.

So I just wanted to thank the representative of the NGO for raising this very valuable and wise recommendation and for bringing our attention to these very crucial elements.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I see there are no more requests for the floor. We have taken note of the comments related to the presence of the representative of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. I would like to express thanks for the cooperation that made it possible.

Firstly, I believe that a link between multilateral work on the issue and work in the First Committee and in the General Assembly, as represented by resolution 65/68, has been established.

Secondly, it seems to me that the scope of resolution 65/68 has been discussed in relation to the work of the Group of Experts and the contribution that the Group could make in the area of space security.

Thirdly, there has been discussion of how to supplement existing regulations to ensure a weapons-free zone.

Fourthly, there have been repeated mentions of the fact that confidence-building is a necessary step but, if I understood correctly, not sufficient in itself. That leads us to the next set of observations, which touched on the need for a binding legal instrument: nature, elements and definition of scope. And obviously one of the most sensitive issues is the verification of those instruments.

These and other elements clearly indicate that there have been repeated references to the establishment of working groups for this and other issues, and this, in my humble opinion, makes it more urgent to search for inclusive, and I repeat, inclusive criteria to bridge gaps and begin a working phase on this and other issues.

This is what I wanted to share with you. I would like to thank you all for your contributions and thoughts. During the next plenary session, on Thursday, 10 March at 10 a.m., we will have an exchange views on negative security assurances. I will try to provide the list of speakers at the start of the meeting, since this should at least prompt more speakers to take the floor.

Thank you very much. Although it is early, the debate has been substantive.

The meeting rose at noon.