
Conference on Disarmament

10 March 2011

English

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

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Thursday, 10 March 2011, at 10.20 a.m.

President: Mr. Pedro Oyarce(Chile)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Good morning, Ambassadors and delegates. I declare open the 1215th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

According to the timetable, we are to have a focused discussion and exchange of opinions on negative security assurances. The discussion that took place on 10 February under the Presidency of Canada showed a renewed interest in the matter. General Assembly resolution 65/43 reaffirms the urgent need to reach agreement on effective international arrangements as soon as possible, in order to provide assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. It is worth asking ourselves how we can reach an agreement on a common approach and, in particular, on a standard formula that could be included in a binding legal instrument. This concern is already reflected in the aforementioned resolution.

During the previous session we were able to see that there were differing views on how to approach this question. The various issues needing to be addressed included the close link between negative security assurances and the non-use of nuclear weapons. The great majority of countries see unilateral decisions and nuclear-weapon-free zones as a positive step, but not sufficient in itself. This is mostly because unilateral decisions, such as those contained in Security Council resolutions 255 and 984, are subject to conditions and reservations and can be revoked.

Moreover, adherence to the protocols in nuclear-weapon-free zones is clearly not enough. Therefore, it is worth asking ourselves if it would be advisable to aspire to the negotiation of a treaty that codifies to some extent the commitments made by nuclear countries.

Could a treaty incorporate those States parties that are not signatories to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and also constitute a step towards a complete ban on the use of nuclear weapons? We should also ask ourselves whether the Conference should negotiate a partial-ban treaty or an instrument to restrict the use or the threat of using nuclear weapons as a first step, if there is no agreement on an instrument that completely bans the use of nuclear weapons. We should also bear in mind the elements contained in the various proposals: the Group of 21 has a proposal contained in documents CD/10 and CD/23; the proposal made by the New Agenda Coalition to the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 NPT Review Conference in 2003; and also the statement made here in this room by the Ambassador of Ireland in the meeting of 10 February 2011, which captured what should be the main objective of a regulatory instrument on negative security assurances. In order to advance any discussion and eventual negotiation of a future instrument on this issue, a number of basic points should first be considered, such as the definitions, scope and structure of the instrument. It is also vital to remember not only the grantors of the assurances, but also the beneficiaries and the conditions under which fulfilment of these assurances will be verified.

In order to implement action seven of the Action Plan from the 2010 NPT Review Conference, would it fall to this Conference on Disarmament to establish a subsidiary body to begin a substantive debate on this topic? We should also consider action five of the Action Plan from the 2010 NPT Review Conference regarding the importance of the reduction of the role and prevalence of nuclear weapons in military policies and national security strategies. I invite you to exchange opinions in as focused a way as possible on this collection of ideas and approaches, as well as others that may materialize, in the interest of preparing a discussion that I hope will be more substantive and formal and hopefully will take place in a working group in the future.

At this time, the following delegations have requested the floor: Brazil, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, New Zealand, Algeria and Pakistan. I give the

floor to Ambassador Luiz Felipe de Macedo Soares, Permanent Representative of Brazil. Ambassador, you have the floor.

Mr. Macedo Soares (Brazil): The expression “weapons of mass destruction”, according to current definitions (official, non-official, academic), encompasses nuclear, chemical, biological (toxin) and radiological weapons. Apart from being excessively injurious and having indiscriminate effects, weapons of mass destruction are designed to cause widespread material damage and kill large numbers of humans in one single attack. The generalized condemnation of all these weapons is thus not surprising.

Those conventional weapons that cause indiscriminate effects and are excessively injurious which are not covered by the definition of weapons of mass destruction have been the object of prohibitions since 1980.

Biological weapons were banned in 1975 and chemical weapons in 1997. Both clearly correspond to what is defined as weapons of mass destruction. However, in strategic terms, they are of limited value for defence purposes or as deterrents. During the more than four decades of cold war, the super-Powers, while amassing considerable quantities of both kinds of weapons, based their deterrence on nuclear warheads and their vectors.

That preference for nuclear weapons can be explained by the word “annihilation”. Nuclear weapons provide that effect instantly and thoroughly, something the other weapons of mass destruction cannot offer. A country disposing of nuclear weapons has the power of annihilation; in brief, it has power. As we all know — and I am not saying anything new — from Hans Morgenthau to Raymond Aron, many scholars explained the matter — nuclear weapons became the base of power politics. Evidence is in the fact that nothing fundamentally changed after the cold war was declared ended. The dissolution of the Soviet Union and the consequent disbandment of the Warsaw Pact did not lead to the extinction of the North Atlantic pact, which, on the contrary, has been strengthened and broadened in scope.

Nuclear weapons lost their function as an East-West deterrent. They now correspond to specific needs of each State possessing them. The world we live in has become less strategically organized and more dangerous. We have to strive to change the present situation, whether it is a realistic goal or not. The first step in that direction is to formally take the decision to work for the abolition of nuclear weapons. This means to start discussing the basis for the negotiation of an instrument that will produce the desired aim. Much toil and time will be needed but, without that first step, if there happens to be any change in international security, it will be in the direction of annihilation. Concerted action, be it in modest steps, is essential. A vision is not enough.

The mention of international security brings me to another aspect of our discussions here in the Conference. I understand that States possessing nuclear weapons do not wish any change in the present situation of international security except in the sense of increasing their own security. There lies the root of the arms race, which, in spite of reduction in numbers, may take the form of increased efficiency and power of destruction.

This doctrine, duly carved in marble, is presented as the “principle of undiminished security for all”. It is often invoked here by States possessing nuclear weapons, and sometimes by other States that belong to strategic alliances based on nuclear weapons. However, it is not commonly used by other States which neither possess nuclear weapons nor belong to alliances based on them. The words “for all” in that principle means to apply solely to States possessing or protected by nuclear weapons. In fact, the security of the other, non-nuclear-weapon States cannot be diminished since it is simply non-existent.

Noting this absurdity, the eighth Review Conference of the NPT, in its Final Document, amended the wording of that principle by adding the term “increased”, so that

we say from then on “the principle of increased and undiminished security for all”. The principle now caters for the haves and the have-nots. The States possessing nuclear weapons and States that place themselves under their protection will have their security undiminished, while the remaining non-nuclear-weapon States will have their security increased. I will come back later to the specific issue of security of non-nuclear-weapon States, since it depends first and foremost on the undertaking of eliminating nuclear weapons.

For that purpose, the practical step to be taken is to establish a subsidiary body with a view to discuss the question of how to achieve the banning of nuclear weapons. Such a measure would unblock the Conference on Disarmament, in a kind of refoundation, and create an atmosphere of confidence injecting fresh oxygen in the somewhat stale air in this chamber.

Those opposing the creation of such a subsidiary body on nuclear disarmament fear that engaging in focused discussions on the elements of a treaty banning nuclear weapons would sap the power of menace and unleash a stream of hope on a democratic international system. Tactical arguments of different sorts are brought forward. It is said that a treaty on fissile material is the next logical step and an issue ripe for negotiation.

Brazil, on proposing a framework for the structure of a treaty on fissile material, contained in document CD/1888, and including the negotiation of it in its proposal of a programme of work, contained in document CD/1889, showed its willingness to pursue that objective. Yet we are not blind to the fact that the “ripeness” of the issue for negotiation merely stems from the willingness of some States to negotiate solely on that matter and not on any other matter. We ought to recognize that this step, be it logical or not, will not mean significant progress toward the elimination of nuclear weapons. The champions of an FMCT have in mind a reinforcement of the non-proliferation regime, an objective that does not necessarily purport nuclear disarmament.

On the other hand, real progress in the direction of a world free of nuclear weapons would be in the form of guarantees contractually given by nuclear-weapon States to non-nuclear-weapon States of not using or threatening to use nuclear weapons against them. This would not equate to a decision to dismantle the nuclear arsenals, but would confine their use to their possessors among themselves.

At least some of the nuclear-weapon States resist the idea of signing a legally binding instrument containing those negative security assurances with the argument that a political declaration would bring the same effect. Among others, three reasons could be invoked to expose the fallacy of such a position.

First: a declaration, even if it is confirmed by a resolution, does not create an obligation under international law duly contracted among parties according to their own legislation. Only through due process can a State confirm its consent to limit its own sovereignty by means of a negotiated international legal instrument.

Second: the refusal to work on a treaty is equivalent to the denial of undertaking an obligation and indicates the intention of keeping the possibility of employing nuclear weapons against any perceived enemy.

Third: some nuclear-weapon States, while declaring that they will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against unarmed States, establish exceptions either based on their judgement on compliance with the NPT by non-nuclear-weapon States or, more generally, on their own vital interests.

Non-nuclear-weapon States that received the so-called positive security assurances by placing themselves under nuclear umbrellas are not ipso facto beneficiaries of negative security assurances.

The state of the debate on this question indicates that some States do not want to relinquish the possibility of attacking with nuclear weapons States that do not have them. This also shows that they intend to keep nuclear weapons deployed and ready for use.

The question of negative security assurances seems to be a dead end, but at least it can serve as a thermometer, a gauge measuring the risk of utter destruction.

Discussions under this item of the agenda usually encompass the question of nuclear-weapon-free zones, their reinforcement by means of cancelling reservations made by nuclear-weapon States and also the establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free zones, beginning with the Middle East. However, the importance of this question and the upcoming conference planned to be held in 2012 require more focused attention. In this regard, it would be advisable to devote a separate meeting of the Conference to a debate on different aspects of nuclear-weapon-free zones.

The existence of this Conference on Disarmament, our presence here today, have no other aim than the search for ways to ensure peace and security. Our basic tool for achieving this end is the constant effort, through our words and ideas, to create a political awareness and a movement that will bring about decisions. And I come back to the essential decision: to initiate actions that will lead to the ban on nuclear weapons.

Some may smile at such an unrealistic objective. At least I am in the good company of the United Nations Secretary-General, who included in his five-point proposal the consideration of negotiations on a nuclear weapons convention or agreement on a framework of separate mutually reinforcing instruments, backed by a strong system of verification, as referred to in paragraph 81 of the Final Document of the eighth NPT Review Conference. Action 3 contained in the “Conclusions and recommendations for follow-on actions” is still more explicit, taking as a basis “the unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals”.

It is difficult to accept the argument according to which constraints imposed by institutions and legislation proper to democratic regimes would impede decisions on nuclear disarmament. Democracy is a fundamental value for the Brazilian nation. It cannot be invoked as an excuse for not taking decisions in compliance with international law, including international humanitarian law.

While insisting on the need for action, I am not unaware of the complexities and heavy burden that would impose the elimination of nuclear weapons. In a recent speech in the context of the United Nations University, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Sergio Duarte, referred to the need for a “disarmament infrastructure” on both national and international levels. According to him:

“Nationally, this would include the establishment of governmental agencies with specific mandates to implement disarmament policies. It would also include the enactment of relevant legislation and regulations, as well as funds from national budgets to support disarmament activities such as the verification of destruction of nuclear weapons, the disposition of fissile materials, and the destruction of delivery systems.

“Globally” — continues the High Representative — “this infrastructure would include new mandates for international organizations — including the International Atomic Energy Agency and the United Nations — to assist the achievement of nuclear disarmament on a truly global scale.”

We have been witnessing the difficulties involving the implementation of the prohibition of other weapons of mass destruction. Yet no one regrets having undertaken those commitments.

Brazil understands all difficulties before us. At the same time, it is important to point out that Brazil does not use the existence of obstacles or arguments of any nature to block progress in any item of our agenda. The evidence is in the proposal my delegation made last year of a programme of work that sought to attend to every sensibility and, in addition, provided movement in all core items.

Let me finally quote from the communiqué issued by the Foreign Ministers of Brazil, India and South Africa two days ago, on 8 March, in New Delhi, at the closure of the seventh IBSA Trilateral Ministerial Commission. By the way, the India-Brazil-South Africa forum is now commemorating its eighth anniversary: very soon, there will be the opening of an important education sports centre in Ramallah (Palestine), with the support of IBSA funds, and this is a modest but a very significant South-South effort of cooperation. And I quote the ministerial communiqué:

“The Ministers renewed their support for global nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation and for the complete non-discriminatory and verifiable elimination of all weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, within a specified time frame. They committed to work in close cooperation in order to help the international community to expedite the achievement of this goal globally.”

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Ambassador. I give the floor to Ambassador So Se Pyong, Permanent Representative of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. Ambassador, you have the floor.

Mr. So (Democratic People’s Republic of Korea): Today, I take this opportunity to say something about this issue, which is one of the urgent items of the CD of this year, that is, negative security assurances.

NSAs to non-nuclear States becomes a vital issue for nuclear disarmament in its purpose and angle. It is an escapist act to pursue merely non-proliferation while evading the issue of assuring non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is the result of the threat posed by existing nuclear weapons.

However, it is regrettable that some countries differentiate between the existence of nuclear weapons and their proliferation and persist with their assertions on the issue of non-proliferation alone.

Now, high-handed policies on nuclear weapons, which are based on a double standard, have reduced the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and other disarmament conventions to dead paper that are of no use and that lack binding force – a sure way of plunging the world into a nuclear arms race.

There can be no justification for the fact that certain countries take issue with the peaceful nuclear activities of countries they detest, while keeping out of their obligations to disarm their own nuclear weapons. The peaceful use of nuclear energy is not a privilege conceded to specific countries only, but the legitimate right of sovereign States.

It can be said that the provision of negative security assurances is essential to the existence of non-nuclear-weapon States and promotion of the process of nuclear disarmament on the globe. Non-nuclear-weapon States demand that nuclear-weapon States should unconditionally assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of these weapons in all cases.

Over the past 60 years, from the time that nuclear weapons appeared in the world, nuclear-weapon States individually declared their commitments to assuring non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or the threat of use of these nuclear weapons in the international forums, including the United Nations. However, nuclear-weapon States seem

to be free to reverse their commitments at any time as they are unilateral, conditional and not legally binding.

All these facts prove that the current declared commitments can do little to solve the problem for good. Therefore, we are of the view that it is vital to establish an international legally binding instrument on NSAs. To this end, my delegation considers that it is requisite for conclusion of a verifiable and legally binding international convention on prohibition of nuclear weapons placing nuclear-weapon States under an obligation to neither use nor threaten to use nuclear weapons in any case and on any condition.

Nuclear-weapon States definitely should give up their nuclear doctrines based on the pre-emptive use of nuclear weapons and commit themselves unconditionally to non-use of nuclear weapons pre-emptively, as demanded by the non-nuclear-weapon States. And they have to come to the negotiation table to draft an international convention in that respect.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear weapons will serve as a reliable war deterrent for protecting the supreme interests of the State and the security of the Korean people as well from the big Powers' threat of aggression and averting a new war and firmly safeguarding the peace and stability of the Korean peninsula under any circumstances.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea will always sincerely implement its international commitment as a responsible nuclear-weapon State. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea will do its utmost to realize the denuclearization of the peninsula and give impetus to worldwide nuclear disarmament and the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons, which is the substantial Global Zero.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Ambassador. The next speakers will be New Zealand, Pakistan, Algeria and the Islamic Republic of Iran. I give the floor to Ambassador Dell Higgle, Permanent Representative of New Zealand. Ambassador, you have the floor.

Ms. Higgle (New Zealand): My delegation welcomes the opportunity to contribute its views on negative security assurances once again. Indeed, we were encouraged by the level of debate here in this issue on our last debate on 10 February.

We would like to think that recent evolutions in the policies of key members might help breathe new life into our engagement on NSAs – itself a long-standing item on the Conference's agenda. But the challenge, of course, is how to harness this development.

The sole work programme to have achieved consensus in this body since 1998 — CD/1864 — accords a negotiating mandate only to fissile materials. This approach was echoed in CD/1889, and indeed it reflects the priorities of the vast majority of delegations here, including my own.

When the United Nations Secretary-General addressed us here in January, he suggested that increased engagement — such as via an informal process — could help engender greater knowledge and trust on our part which we could then build upon at the time when the Conference might begin its formal work. In that spirit, I would like to make several observations on NSAs against the time when this body is able to carry out the activities for which it was established, namely negotiations.

As I noted during our debate on this topic last month, New Zealand has long supported the notion, embodied in the outcome of the NPT Review Conference in 2000 and referenced also in the 2010 Action Plan, that legally binding security assurances would strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime. It remains very high on our list of priorities.

Given the commitment of the nuclear-weapon States to the NPT and to the elimination of nuclear weapons, we continue to view entering into legally binding security assurances as a comparatively quick and effective way by which those States can bring about a significant improvement in the international security environment.

I have just alluded to the nuclear-weapon States that are party to the NPT, but I would like now to widen that reference. When I spoke on this topic last month, I recalled my delegation's sensitivity to the risk that dealing with NSAs in the context of the Conference might potentially blur the distinction between NPT nuclear-weapon States, on the one hand, and those nuclear-weapon-possessing States which are not party to that Treaty, on the other.

That said, I listened very carefully to, and was intrigued by, the remarks Ireland made during that same debate on 10 February, and you yourself, Mr. President, had just referenced Ireland's comments this morning.

The distinguished Ambassador of Ireland expressed the view then that it was perfectly possible to conceive of a treaty on NSAs negotiated in the Conference whose terms did not condone the possession of nuclear arsenals by States who have not joined the NPT. Ireland explained that such a treaty could take the form of a general prohibition on the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States party to the NPT.

Such a treaty would be opened for universal adherence. As Ireland pointed out, it would not add to the existing obligations of the non-nuclear-weapon members of the NPT. Nor would it confer, *a priori*, any particular status on any other State.

Rather, its parties, motivated by the desire to genuinely advance global security, would be obligating themselves — irrespective of their own status vis-à-vis the NPT — not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon NPT parties.

It seems to my delegation that this thoughtful suggestion indeed offers the prospect of our being able to step around what has seemed for some time to be a roadblock on this issue, and I would certainly welcome hearing the views of others on it during the course of our discussions here.

In the meantime, New Zealand will continue to call upon the nuclear-weapon States to respect fully their existing commitments with regard to security assurances pending the conclusion of multilaterally negotiated legally binding ones.

I should like now to end on a broader note: one relating to the question of our programme of work. I know, Mr. President, that you and indeed your Canadian predecessor have worked assiduously on all our behalf on this issue. My fear, however, is that notwithstanding all your efforts (and those that may well follow from your successors), the work programme of the Conference will remain blocked — so that, like Cassandra, we will still be wringing our hands over a dead Caesar many months from now.

My delegation was especially struck by the clarity with which United States Secretary of State Clinton deplored the current situation in this body during her statement here last week. She said then:

“No nation has to agree to the treaty” — she was referring, of course, to a treaty on fissile materials, but the point is the same with regard to any product emanating from this body. To return to her quote: “But it is unacceptable for any nation to prevent other nations from pursuing what such a treaty could look like and what benefits it could produce for the world.”

Unless we are able to move forward on the negotiation of a fissile material treaty and begin substantive work on the other topics on our agenda — including, of course,

NSAs — the mantra of this Conference as the “single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum” will continue to sound like a work of fiction.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you for your comments, Ambassador. I will not comment on them now, but thank you. I give the floor to the Alternate Representative of Pakistan, Mr. Shafqat Ali Khan. You have the floor.

Mr. Khan (Pakistan): We continue to believe that there is an urgent need for the Conference to undertake negotiations for a legally binding and effective international arrangement to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. This is a strategic as well as a moral imperative; NSAs are vital for non-proliferation, as well as nuclear disarmament.

We have heard strident calls to make the Conference relevant to the demands of the international community. We agree, and feel that undertaking negotiations for legally binding NSAs would be the critical step to make the Conference relevant to the aspirations of the international community. Negotiations for NSAs would be less complicated yet enormously consequential.

My delegation expressed such views in detail on the question of negative security assurances in the Conference plenary on 10 February 2011. During that meeting, we all saw that barring a miniscule minority, an overwhelming number of Conference members indicated the importance they attached to the conclusion of legally binding NSAs for the non-nuclear-weapon States. I take this opportunity to briefly comment on a few issues in this regard, essentially to take the debate forward.

Many delegations have highlighted the importance of nuclear-weapon-free zones in the context of NSAs. We broadly agree with this assessment, but such zones cannot obviate the need for negotiations in the Conference. In several cases the signature or ratification of the relevant protocols by some of the nuclear-weapon States have been accompanied by reservations aimed at retaining the possibility of using nuclear weapons in certain circumstances, thus nullifying the fact of nuclear-weapon-free zones in terms of the NSAs.

Secondly, the universalization of nuclear-weapon-free zones at this point in time is impossible, since some regions either have nuclear-weapon States or States under a nuclear umbrella. In the case nuclear-weapon States consider nuclear-weapon-free zones a useful vehicle to promote NSAs, this can be strengthened by initiating a negotiating process in the Conference on NSAs. The nuclear-weapon States should be able to agree to the universal application of guarantees they are already willing to extend to individual nuclear-weapon States.

The Conference during last month’s debate was informed by a major Power that it will “continue to strengthen conventional capabilities and reduce the role of nuclear weapons in deterring non-nuclear attacks”. The statement implies that NSAs would only be extended when the powerful countries have perhaps developed conventional weapons with enormous destructive potential on a scale comparable to nuclear weapons. This is certainly unacceptable and reveals an approach focusing on multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation as a cost-free exercise and not as a limitation on power or its use on a massive destructive scale. For the millions of dead it will hardly matter if they died from conventional rather than nuclear weapons. Our purpose, of course, is to arrest mass destruction.

We have also heard statements arguing NSAs should be treated in the context of the NPT. We understand and respect this viewpoint, yet we feel that substantive progress on this issue in the Conference would not be at the cost of progress within the NPT framework. In fact, we feel that the two tracks should be mutually reinforcing. The key objective

remains to negotiate legally binding and effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you. I give the floor to the Alternate Representative of Algeria, Mr. Hamza Khezif. You have the floor.

Mr. Khezif (Algeria): The delegation of Algeria has previously expressed its position on the issue of negative security assurances, at the plenary session of 10 February 2010. Today, I wish to take the floor to re-emphasize the importance that we attach to this issue. It is only logical and natural to grant such assurances to States parties to the NPT as they are non-nuclear-weapon States, and it is of the utmost importance to do so in view of the repercussions that that would have on the security and safety of those States, particularly those not covered by a nuclear umbrella or a security agreement of this kind. Nobody here can deny the legitimacy of this demand. Indeed, the Security Council in its resolution 984 (1995) recognizes the legitimate interest of non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT to obtain security assurances. Such measures are normal for the maintenance of the security of such States. In this context, the delegation of Algeria considers that the issue of negative security assurances is ripe for urgent negotiations, from both the moral and the political perspective.

The current system of assurances falls short of our desired goal. The assurances granted under unilateral declarations by the nuclear States are not legally binding and are accompanied by a number of conditions, as has been eloquently expressed by the distinguished Ambassador of Brazil. On the other hand, the assurances granted in the context of nuclear-weapon-free zones are, in turn, insufficient, as they are accompanied by conditions. In addition, these zones do not cover all regions of the world, the Middle East region being a case in point. Therefore, Algeria believes that there is a need to conclude a universal, non-discriminatory international legal instrument that would deter non-nuclear-weapon States from the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons and that the Conference on Disarmament is the appropriate forum for negotiations on this issue. In this connection, we recall that in 1998, the Conference on Disarmament established an ad hoc committee entrusted with negotiating an agreement on effective international arrangements to secure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Such arrangements would take the form of a legally binding instrument. In 1999, three nuclear-weapon States, namely France, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America, proposed a programme of work in document CD/1586 that also included the establishment of an ad hoc committee on negative security assurances, with the same mandate as before. Regrettably, this option later experienced a setback and a number of nuclear-weapon States objected to the formula of concluding an international legally binding instrument. However, subsequent changes at the global level favour the conclusion of a multilateral, non-discriminatory and legally binding agreement on these assurances. This latter approach meets the security concerns of non-nuclear-weapon States on the one hand and promotes the nuclear non-proliferation regime on the other hand. The credibility of any treaty depends on its ability to meet the concerns and interests of all parties.

Mr. President, the military doctrines adopted by some nuclear-weapon States that base their security policies on nuclear deterrence in their security policies and allowed their use even against non-nuclear-weapon States under the pretext of self-defence, according to article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, makes the conclusion of a multilateral agreement on negative security assurances all the more urgent. We would like to add that the argument of self-defence cannot be invoked here, particularly as the use of nuclear weapons with their indiscriminate destructive effects cannot take into account international humanitarian law, as referred to by the International Court of Justice in its legal opinion. Moreover, the repercussions of the use of such weapons cannot be conceived of as being

outside the purview of crimes that fall within the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court.

The broad participation in the debate on negative security assurances at the plenary meeting on 10 February 2011 is an indication of the paramount importance of this issue and encourages us to pursue the debate further. The delegation of Algeria believes that the proposal made by the distinguished Ambassador of Ireland during the meeting of 10 February 2011, concerning the conclusion of treaties under which all States parties would be committed to the non-use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapons States parties to the NPT, represents a useful basis on which to pursue our deliberations on this topic and offers a point of departure that could be complemented by other proposals and ideas on consultation mechanisms and legislative measures for the implementation of such a commitment, and by fact-finding to clarify any problems relating to representation, including means of resort to the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council, in addition to special measures for the provision of assistance to countries subjected to nuclear attack.

Lastly, the delegation of Algeria believes that the mandate contained in document CD/1864, adopted in 2009, concerning the programme of work is a good basis for starting discussions on negative security assurances, in the hope that this would lead to a draft containing legally binding security assurances in a global instrument.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you. I give the floor to the Alternate Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Dr. Mohammad Hassan Daryaei. You have the floor.

Mr. Daryaei (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. President, I use this opportunity to express our appreciation on the manner that you are presiding over this Conference. I assure you of the full cooperation of my delegation. I would like also to express our deep appreciation to the distinguished Ambassador of Brazil for providing this insightful idea in a very elaborated statement related to the NSA, which is our legitimate right.

One of the main preoccupations of the members of the NPT during the negotiation of the Treaty was the provision of credible security assurances to the non-nuclear States. Non-nuclear-weapon States decided to join the NPT being aware of the discriminatory nature of this Treaty, with this understanding that they would not be the target of use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Therefore, in the resolution for the adoption of the NPT, the General Assembly requested the then negotiation body to consider urgently the proposal that the nuclear-weapon States should give assurances that they would not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States without nuclear weapons on their territories.

It was in response to the insistent request of non-nuclear-weapon States that the nuclear-weapon States recognized this legitimate interest for the first time in 1978 and on the verge of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the NPT. The nuclear-weapon States made individual statements to the Conference on Disarmament in which they provided security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States to the Treaty. The Security Council in its resolution 984 took note of the statements made by each of the nuclear-weapon States in which they gave security assurances against the use of nuclear weapons to non-nuclear-weapon States to the Treaty.

Subject to the full commitment of nuclear-weapon States to the declarations, these assurances remain partial, declarative and limited, with no legal burden on the part of nuclear-weapon States, let alone the recent development that some nuclear-weapon States fully breached these commitments and in an implicit and explicit manner threaten the non-nuclear States parties to the NPT. It is clear that this declaration cannot substitute the international legally binding commitment. The assurances provided under protocols to the

treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones are also subject to many conditions. It seems that as long as nuclear weapons exist, the shadow of the use or threat of use of these inhuman weapons will plague the brilliant life of mankind.

It is extremely dangerous that some nuclear-weapon States in their nuclear doctrines see the possibility of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear States parties to the NPT and review the development of easy-to-use nuclear weapons. The matter of more concern is that the threat and dangerous doctrine of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear States were officially proclaimed and repeated. All of these vicious developments have put the non-nuclear-weapon States more than ever under the real threat of possible use of nuclear weapons. The international community should not await the deployment of such weapons to react. Such policies and practices seem to have learned no lessons from the nightmare of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Therefore, these practices should be condemned and not be repeated any more.

Having heard all the views expressed on this very important subject, we remain convinced that the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is their total elimination in a transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner in accordance with article VI of the NPT and as stipulated in the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice in 1996.

Pending achieving that goal, nuclear-weapon States must provide legally binding, credible and effective security assurances to the non-nuclear States against the use or threat of use of these weapons. These assurances are not a favour to be granted by nuclear-weapon States. These assurances are not an optional choice of the nuclear-weapon States. Based on the principle of security for all, they are the legitimate right of those countries who deliberately renounced nuclear weapons in the framework of the NPT and they are the legal obligation of nuclear-weapon States.

The decision of non-nuclear-weapon States not to pursue nuclear weapons is more important than the decision of those who stick to their nuclear weapons. We believe that these legally binding credible security assurances only partially counterbalance the renunciation of nuclear weapons by non-nuclear States. The conclusion of universal, unconditional and legally binding instruments on security assurances to non-nuclear States should be pursued as a matter of priority by the international community.

Therefore, we propose that the Conference on Disarmament establish an ad hoc committee to negotiate a draft of a legally binding instrument on the legality of the use of nuclear weapons and providing unconditional security assurances by the five nuclear-weapon States to non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT as a matter of urgency.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you. I give the floor to Ambassador Akio Suda, Permanent Representative of Japan. Ambassador, you have the floor.

Mr. Suda (Japan): I already made a statement concerning the Japanese basic position on this agenda item of NSA at the last session of the Conference. So, today, I would just like to add some elaboration on some points on this issue.

I wish to reiterate that in order to advance nuclear disarmament, it is fundamentally important that all States possessing nuclear weapons reduce the role of nuclear weapons in their national security strategies. It should be recalled that nuclear-weapon States, under Action 5 of the Final Document of the NPT Review Conference, are called upon to further diminish the role and significance of nuclear weapons in all military and security concepts, doctrines and policies. Negative security assurances would play a significant part in the reduction of the role of nuclear weapons. Moreover, we also believe that reducing the risk of an accidental or unauthorized launch of nuclear weapons and further reducing the

operational status of nuclear weapon systems in ways that promote international stability and security are important in the relevant issues that we should further seek in the context of the reduction of the role of nuclear weapons.

I would also like to recall Action 8 of the Final Document, which stated the responsibilities of the nuclear-weapon States to fully respect their existing commitment with regard to security assurances. Building on this action, Japan further calls on nuclear-weapon States to take measures such as providing stronger NSAs to non-nuclear-weapon States that comply with the NPT.

In this regard, we welcome the latest Nuclear Posture Review by the United States and the Strategic Defence and Security Review by the United Kingdom, which provide strengthened assurances not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States that are parties to the NPT and in compliance with their nuclear non-proliferation obligations. Japan also believes that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones where appropriate plays an important part in promoting security assurances, and that ensuring the effectiveness of existing zones is certainly an effective and significant way to realizing legally binding NSAs.

In this context, it should be noted that in Action 9 of the Final Document of the NPT Review Conference, all concerned States — which in our view encompass both nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear States of the region — are encouraged to constructively consult and cooperate to bring about the entry into force of the relevant legally binding protocols of all such nuclear-weapon-free-zone treaties.

Finally, I would like to stress the importance of the conference endorsed by the NPT Review Conference to be held in 2012 on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you. I give the floor to Ambassador Kwon, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea. Ambassador, you have the floor.

Mr. Kwon (Republic of Korea): On the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's remark on the status of nuclear-weapon States, I believe that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's trial to develop a nuclear weapon is the real cause of uncertainty in North-East Asia and the world as well. Despite the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's argument, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea cannot have the status of the nuclear-weapon nations in any case according to United Nations Security Council resolutions 1718 and 1874. According to United Nations Security Council resolution 1874, "the Democratic People's Republic of Korea cannot have the status of a nuclear-weapon State in accordance with the NPT in any case". So, the Republic of Korea strongly urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abandon all nuclear weapons and their existing nuclear programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you. I give the floor to the Alternate Representative of Mexico, Ms. María Antonieta Jáquez. You have the floor.

Ms. Jáquez (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Mr. President; and thank you to all the delegates who have participated in this interesting debate, which I am joining a little late in order to add some of Mexico's ideas and reiterate its position on negative security assurances.

It is not necessary to repeat again and again that my country considers the absolute guarantee against the use of nuclear weapons to be the total elimination of these inhuman weapons. However, we believe that while we work to achieve this complete abolition of nuclear weapons, it is not only necessary, but a condition of legitimate justice, that the countries that have not chosen the nuclear option as a basis for their security are able to obtain a legal and binding commitment from those who possess nuclear weapons that those weapons will not be used against them.

For Mexico, it is logical and congruous that the countries that made this choice do not represent a risk to the security of nuclear countries. However, the value that nuclear weapons have been awarded by nuclear-weapon States in power relations in their military and security doctrines exposes both them and non-nuclear-weapon States to a risk that we feel is incomprehensible, especially in this era where risk factors for security are multifactorial.

Therefore I would like to thank the Ambassador of Brazil for his very prompt and opportune proposal to focus on the issues related to negative security assurances and to keep the discussion of nuclear-weapon-free zones separate from this discussion.

For Mexico, nuclear-weapon-free zones are not an end in themselves, nor do they substitute or should be used to substitute for efforts to achieve nuclear disarmament. Therefore, it is good to reiterate something that is obvious to Mexico, and of which Ambassador Macedo Soares reminded us: that neither nuclear-weapon States nor non-nuclear-weapon States, nor those that form part of nuclear-weapon-free zones, nor even those covered by the so-called positive security assurances or umbrellas, are sure at this time that nuclear weapons will not be used against them. Therefore, it is necessary to establish norms or strong standards on this issue.

We also understand from the large number of interventions to this effect that there is almost unanimous support for negotiation of this agreement. Unfortunately, we are a body that does not accept majority decisions as part of its rules of procedure. Unless we can reach unanimous agreement, there can be no negotiations on this topic. This is a shame, since we have seen in the debate that a large majority of countries, if not almost all, wish to provide legal certainty to those countries that have chosen other measures to protect themselves.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you. I give the floor to the Representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. You have the floor.

Mr. Jon (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The Democratic People's Republic of Korea delegation would like to respond to the observation made by the South Korean delegation.

My delegation wishes to draw the attention of the Conference on Disarmament to the fact that South Korea disregarded the substance of the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula. South Korea urged the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abandon its nuclear programme, neglecting to consider the root cause of the nuclear issue on the peninsula. They sought only to flatter the super-Power by supporting that country's hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea rather than promoting or pursuing a fair resolution of the nuclear issue.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear deterrent promotes stability on the Korean peninsula and thus further contributes to international peace and security. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea reiterated its position on several occasions that it rejected the United Nations Security Council resolutions 1718 and 1874 and would not be bound by them. Those resolutions reflect the unilateral demands of the United States, contrary to the United Nations Charter and international law, which provides for the

principle of sovereign equality and fairness in international relations, and therefore will have no legal force whatsoever. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea will continue to take resolute actions as long as a hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea persists.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you. I give the floor to the Alternate Representative of Israel, Ms. Rahamimoff-Honig. You have the floor.

Ms. Rahamimoff-Honig (Israel): Mr. President, as this is the first time my delegation is taking the floor under your presidency, please allow me to begin by expressing our congratulations on your presidency and assuring you of our delegation's full cooperation and support in the fulfilment of your duties.

As several delegations have referred in today's discussions on negative security assurances, as well as during the discussion of this topic under the Canadian presidency, to the issue of nuclear-weapon-free zones, some with particular reference to a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, we find it necessary to reiterate once more Israel's well-known position on this issue.

Israel attaches importance to the eventual establishment of the Middle East as a mutually verifiable zone free of biological, chemical and nuclear weapons and their means of delivery. However, this cannot be detached from realities surrounding us. It cannot be detached from the unique circumstances pertaining to the Middle East, nor from the conduct, statements and policies of regional States. It cannot be thus detached as its eventual establishment will not occur in a vacuum. The Middle East backdrop includes numerous examples of gross non-compliance with international obligations even within the WMD sphere, as well as proliferation of relevant knowledge and materials. It includes extreme hostility of certain countries in the region that continue to reject any form of peaceful reconciliation and coexistence. It includes non-recognition of States' right to exist. To this one must now add fundamental internal instability.

Arms control and other security issues must be realistically addressed while considering the regional context. The political reality in our region requires a practical step-by-step approach; comprehensive, durable and sustainable peace and stability in the Middle East are essential in this respect. The foundations for such a future must be based on historic reconciliation, mutual trust and respect, safe and recognized borders and good-neighbourliness. Effective arms control measures can only be achieved and sustained in a region in which war, armed conflict, terrorism, political hostility, incitement and calls for the annihilation of other States cease to be features of everyday life.

The experience of other regions of the world indicates that peace and security must first exist in order to foster the necessary conditions to deal with the more complex and sensitive issues related to the establishment of a zone free of WMD and delivery systems. Such processes can only be generated in regions from within, reflecting substantial and real progress on the ground. They can only exist where arrangements are freely arrived at by States of the region. They cannot be superimposed from the outside, nor can they advance the security of one State at the expense of another. These underlying premises should be borne in mind in any discussion regarding the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone and its possible contribution to peace and security.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you. I give the floor to the Alternate Representative of Algeria. Mr. Khezif, you have the floor.

Mr. Khezif (Algeria): Mr. President, thank you. I am very sorry for taking the floor a second time but asked to speak because my colleague in the delegation of Algeria told me that there had been an ambiguity in the interpretation of my statement, perhaps because I

did not make myself clear in Arabic or spoke too rapidly. So to clarify this point, I will now reread the paragraph in the hope that the delegation of Algeria will be properly understood.

The military doctrines adopted by some nuclear powers that count on nuclear deterrence as part of their security policies and authorize the use of nuclear weapons even against non-nuclear-weapon States, using self-defence as a pretext under Article 521 of the Charter of the United Nations, make the quest to conclude a multilateral treaty on negative assurances all the more urgent. We would like to say that self-defence cannot be invoked as a pretext for the use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States, particularly as the use of nuclear weapons has devastating effects that cannot take the provisions of international humanitarian law into account, as also stated in the opinion of the International Court of Justice. The effects of the use of these weapons are difficult to imagine as anything other than crimes and that would fall under the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you. The Alternate Representative of Egypt has the floor.

Mr. El-Atawy (Egypt): Mr. President, since it is the first time that my delegation is speaking under your presidency, let me assure you of our ultimate appreciation to your way of conducting business and absolute transparency in the conducting of business, and we particularly appreciate having a member of the G-21 assume the presidency at this point in time.

Since the issue of nuclear-weapon-free zones was mentioned during the discussion of NSAs both during the session — I think it was 10 February — and again today, let me just check a few points, especially with reference to the Middle East. As was mentioned before by my delegation, as well as a few other delegations, nuclear-weapon-free zones are not a replacement for a legally binding agreement on negative security assurances for a multiple of reasons, one of which is that not every region in the world can have a nuclear-weapon-free zone and that some of the areas do have nuclear-weapon States, so we cannot have nuclear-weapon-free zones in those areas, and it would be unfair to non-nuclear-weapon States existing in areas that have nuclear weapons and nuclear power in nuclear-weapon States not to enjoy undiminished and increased security for all, to borrow the expression from the Ambassador of Brazil.

Pertaining to the Middle East specifically, we are encouraged that numerous delegations in this venue referred to it and expressed their support for the conference that will take place in 2012 for the preparation of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, and let me just take this opportunity to remind the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the depositary States that we are basically waiting for them to start the preparation towards holding this conference in 2012, and there was one reference made that developments in other United Nations locations, particularly Vienna, delayed the preparation a little bit, but now we are over that and let's start in earnest making the preparation for the 2012 conference, specially that time is running out.

One other point, pertaining to the whole *raison d'être* of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone. A nuclear-weapon-free zone — actually any disarmament arrangement — is a helping tool for stability and security in areas, and that would apply to the Middle East as well. We should not wait until we have total peace in the Middle East to think about establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the area. On the contrary, we should try to help the peace process in that area by establishing undiminished and increased security for all countries in the area. There were references to occasions where proliferation efforts were cited, but that precisely is because we did not deal with nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the area. We should all come together and discuss this matter, all countries in the area, and in this context, I would again invite Israel and all other countries

in the area to participate in the conference in 2012. Every country should come in and should present the issues that it's bringing to the table, and then we have to agree on what are the parameters of the area we're talking about. That would achieve increased and undiminished security for all.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you. The Alternate Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran has the floor.

Mr. Daryaei (Islamic Republic of Iran): I am sorry to take the floor again, because I already expressed our position about NSA here, but I have to react to some comments because I saw that there is some effort to distort the facts and divert the public opinion from the main source of danger and concern in the region of the Middle East, which is the existence of nuclear weapons of the Israeli regime. It is not acceptable to use false excuses or phobias to keep nuclear weapons. So, it is not acceptable to use baseless excuses to do the most inhuman atrocities against innocent people. It is not acceptable to use false excuses to defy the international norms and regulations. So, I think we have to pay attention to the main reality of the region and stick to the issues that we are dealing with, and that the main topic that we are dealing with is the negative security assurances here. So I cannot accept any baseless ideas to continue to preserve the nuclear weapon option for some in the region.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you. I give the floor to the Alternate Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic. You have the floor.

Mr. Al-Nuqari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation would like to express its deep appreciation for the way you are conducting our work and wish you every success. We hope that under your presidency we can establish and perhaps adopt a prospective work programme for the Conference. I would like to deal here with the debate raised at the end of this session with regard to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. I would like to note that in fact the establishment of such a zone in the Middle East is quite unlike the establishment of such zones in other regions under the protocols, in view of the specificities of this region as compared with others.

The call for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region formed part of the decision on the indefinite extension of the NPT. Certain assurances were given even by depositary States, by three of the nuclear States. The Arab States accepted the decision on the basis of this understanding, and it forms part of their security concept. There is an understanding among States parties to the NPT that assurances are binding on all and that Israel should not be the only one in the region to possess nuclear weapons; these assurances are not only binding on Israel but on the international community, *erga omnes*. This understanding was further confirmed in the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice concerning the illegality of the construction of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Thus, the international community as a whole is responsible for the establishment of this zone. The other point that I would like to consider is that we have heard justifications which, if applied at the global level would lead to the destruction of the world. We believe that the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone could lead to a just and lasting peace in the Middle East region.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you. Mr. Khezif, Alternate Representative of Algeria, you have the floor.

Mr. Khezif (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Algerian delegation would like to recall here the background to the issue of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. First, this issue goes back to the decision adopted by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, as part of a package on the basis of which the Arab countries accepted the indefinite extension of the NPT. Second, it has been said that this zone cannot be established in a void; we say that we accepted to accede to the NPT and we accepted to

extend the NPT in the hope of establishing this zone, as a first step and as an initiative to show good faith in order to achieve progress in the peace process, which has been stumbling for reasons known to all. Third, we believe that the 2012 conference upon which the most recent review conference decided, on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, as mentioned by the representative of Egypt, is a good opportunity to start negotiating the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you. I give the floor to the Permanent Representative of Italy. Ambassador Manfredi, you have the floor.

Mr. Manfredi (Italy): Just a few words. I would like to point out that the zone in the Middle East is a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, which includes nuclear weapons, chemical weapons and biological weapons, and I would also make a comment to say that it is common sense that the political tensions in the area will represent, very likely, an obstacle to negotiations. But, on the other hand, achieving a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East will help to reduce political tensions in the area. So we have a delicate balance to take into consideration.

Finally, I would like to say that my Government is looking forward to an early start next year of these negotiations, and we will take part actively if invited.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Ambassador. I see no other delegations wishing to take the floor.

I would like to thank you for the ideas suggested, as I think they develop and complement the general debate that took place on 10 February, under the Presidency of Canada. There have been interesting references to the provision for use, and the role, of nuclear weapons, and we have been reminded of the importance of taking into account the Action Plan from the 2010 NPT Review Conference, particularly actions five and eight.

Moreover, the importance of reducing the operational readiness of nuclear weapons was highlighted, which is addressed by the de-alerting group. Thirdly, negative security assurances have been highlighted in the context of multidimensional security risks, as mentioned by the delegate of Mexico. In addition, the need for strong standards on this issue, specifically a legal instrument, was highlighted both in this discussion and the one held in February.

The value of nuclear-weapon-free zones was also recalled, but these should be complemented with an instrument. It was repeatedly said that the zones cannot be a substitute for an agreement. They are an important step, but not enough. There was also mention of the regional contexts that should be taken into consideration in the nuclear-weapon-free zones. Moreover, references were made to the complementarity that should exist between the work of the Conference on Disarmament and the NPT, obviously taking into account the fact that some States are not party to the NPT.

Finally, the importance of this issue within the core issues was highlighted, which has also influenced the development of an acceptable programme of work. We hope that this issue can be examined sooner rather than later by a working group or ad hoc committee, based on the assumption that nuclear-weapon-free zones represent a significant improvement to international security and favour, complement and assist in the development of a non-proliferation regime.

I would like to thank you for your inputs as I think that they have helped focus on an issue that should continue to be examined by the Conference.

Before adjourning the meeting, I would like to give the floor to Ambassador Suda, Permanent Representative of Japan, who I understand wishes to make an announcement. Ambassador, you have the floor.

Mr. Suda (Japan): I would just like to make the brief announcement of an event my delegation will host together with Japan-based international NGO Peace Boat, an event entitled “Survivors of the atomic bombings (*hibakusha*) speak out for nuclear-weapon-free zones”, on Monday next week from 10 a.m. through 12 noon in room VII of this United Nations building. The Peace Boat is currently carrying out its global peace voyage travelling around the world. This Peace Boat has on board nine survivors of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki who have been officially appointed by the Japanese Government as Special Communicators for a nuclear-free world. They are travelling on the 90-day voyage bringing their message to ports of the world, including ports in South America, Europe, North Africa, South Africa and South Asia. On 14 March, next Monday, six of the nine Special Communicators will be in Geneva and visiting this Palais des Nations to make an oral testimony and brief on their activities. This will be a valuable and exceptional opportunity for us to learn the actual experiences of the devastating nature of nuclear weapons. I hope that many of the distinguished delegates, together with your colleagues, could attend this event as members of the Geneva disarmament community.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Ambassador, for the invitation to share in this testimony on subjects that are not alien to this Conference. We have finished our work for today. The next plenary session will take place on Tuesday 15 March at 10 a.m., in which, in accordance with the programme of work, we will be examining items five, six and seven. As in the discussion of the core issues, I hope that we will hear your opinions on these items, as that is the only way to comprehensively examine the agenda.

Thank you very much. The meeting is now adjourned.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.