
Conference on Disarmament

24 March 2011

English

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

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Thursday 24 March 2011, at 10.25 a.m.

President: Mr. Wang Qun(China)

The President: I now call to order the 1218th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. In the light of the agreed indicative timetable as contained in document CD/WP.566, this plenary will be devoted to an exchange of views on agenda items 1 and 2, with a general focus on nuclear disarmament. I recognize the distinguished representative of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Duncan (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): Mr. Chairman, I would like to exercise my right under rule 30 of the Conference rules of procedure to make an intervention on the business of the work of the Conference, with your permission and with apologies to those on the list of speakers for today.

To repeat, with apologies to those on the speakers' list, I would like to exercise my right under rule 30 of any member State to raise a subject relevant to the work of the Conference at a plenary meeting.

Mr. Chairman, we very much welcome the active engagement of the Chinese presidency, and we are grateful for having had time to reflect on your proposal WP.565. However, we were somewhat puzzled by some of the reports that went to regional groups about our position on this document. Just to make clear for the record, our support was for those requesting further time to consider your proposal, and we believe that this merits further discussion since, from our reading of the meeting on Tuesday, no full member of the Conference objected to your proposal WP.565. Indeed, following further consultation with my capital, we consider that WP.565 might form a practical basis for future work, and an increased tempo of meetings may be useful if we have a clear goal at the end.

In the discussion on Tuesday, the issue of discussion itself came up, and we very much agreed with the German colleague's intervention about a simple exchange of views, which is one way of discussion, being really more suitable for the UNDC than for the Conference on Disarmament. However, discussion with a clear objective in mind, for example, the discussion mandates in 1864, could lead us to the sort of meaningful outcome that the General Assembly is expecting of this body. We do share the Mexican concerns about how to capture such discussion in an informal setting, but we believe that the original WP.565, with small but important adjustments, such as making sure that there was a fair balance – we note that there was no Western Group coordinator in your proposal, and further work on how to capture the reporting might be a better vehicle for taking forward our work rather than simply a reiteration of what we have done under the previous presidencies, excellent though that work was. We therefore formally request that you allow further time for discussion on the programme of activities on how we structure our work during the next three weeks in front of us.

The President: Thank you for your statement made under rule 30 of the rules of procedure of the Conference on Disarmament. Any follow-up comments to what the distinguished Ambassador of the United Kingdom said? I recognize the Ambassador of Germany.

Mr. Hoffmann (Germany): I have to say I am somewhat puzzled and surprised. Can I recall the developments? On Monday evening we received through the secretariat a draft indicative timetable with informal meetings, that is the 565 paper. To our surprise this document was already on the table the following morning, that is Tuesday, the last plenary, as WP.565, as I said. The proposal was actually not complete; there were still brackets with respect to the nomination of some chairs of the proposed informal meetings. Then some delegations, including my own, requested to have more time to consult on this, and this request was actually turned down. And, then after a short interruption of the session, you, Mr. President, presented an alternative indicative timetable with formal meetings only. Once again, a request to give us more time to consult on this, brought forward by this delegation was turned down. I had, in fact, suggested to arrive at a gentleman's agreement

on how we allocate the time, as it was done by the previous Canadian and Chilean presidencies.

I have to say I don't recall having made any remark with respect to the UNDC, as my British colleague implied. Not quite sure what he refers to. But, in any event, I remember very clearly how you, Mr. President, ruled. Maybe we could ask the secretariat to give us a readout — I am sure they have been working on the *procès-verbal* already — because I remember quite clearly that you said that you will proceed according to the second version of your timetable. And it was clearly a decision taken by you on your own authority. Therefore, I am a bit surprised that the issue is opened up again.

Now, from our perspective what really matters and counts is what leads to progress in our work. And let me say, and this is an important point, that in the Conference every delegation has every opportunity to express its views at any time, be it in formal or informal meeting. Now, our sense would be that since the matter has been brought up again by the United Kingdom delegation, if there are any indications that progress on certain issues is possible, might be possible, or appears likely, the Conference is flexible enough to adapt its working rhythm and working method very quickly. Now, in the light of the positions taken in two rounds of discussions on all items on the Conference agenda in the first eight weeks of this session, your decision, Mr. President, for WP.566 therefore appeared to us to reflect the objective situation quite adequately. But let me add: if there are strong other views, and in particular, if it can be demonstrated that by going for the informal approach, that is 565, we can make more progress, we would, of course, not object, and we would make ourselves available for meetings, if the President decides to reverse his own decision and go back to his proposal for an indicative timetable with informal meetings. In that case it would, however, be important to know whether the blanks regarding the chairs can and will be filled at any time soon.

The President: Any other delegations? Yes, the distinguished Ambassador of Algeria.

Mr. Jazāiry (Algeria): This is just on a point of order. With due respect to what the distinguished Ambassador of the United Kingdom has just said, referring to paragraph 30 of the rules of procedure, which says that it is the right of any member State of the Conference to raise any subject relevant to the work of the Conference at a plenary meeting and to have full opportunity of presenting his views, this is fine, nobody disagrees with this, but this does not give a member a right to raise this issue under article 30 as a point of order, or right of reply, which would give it precedence on the work that has been agreed to for this plenary. This plenary has got a list of speakers, and I think that the proper way to deal with our business is to proceed with the list of speakers and then to have an additional item on the agenda which would relate to the programme of work, if we have spare time, and discuss it in a relaxed manner. But this should not be seen as a kind of a point of order that has precedence over the programme already achieved. So, I do recommend that we proceed with the list of speakers, we see how much time we have left and then perhaps at the suggestion of the distinguished representative of the United Kingdom, we discuss the issue of the programme of work today, and if everybody agrees, we discuss it and hopefully we come to an understanding.

The President: Thank you, the distinguished Ambassador of Algeria, for your important intervention. And, I for my part, without prejudice to rule 30, and given the fact that this problem has already been brought up as a result of the statement made by the distinguished Ambassadors of the United Kingdom and Germany, I would prefer to seek to put behind this problem first before, I think, coming back to the list of speakers. Once again, without prejudice to rule 30 of the rules of procedure of the Conference, and also with all my respect to the distinguished Ambassador of Algeria, I recognize the United Kingdom.

Mr. Duncan (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): I will start my intervention by apologizing to the list of speakers, and obviously I understand that others have pressing matters to attend to and have speeches prepared. However, I would dissent slightly from my esteemed colleague Ambassador Jazaïry's interpretation of rule 30, which I have in front of me, which says that subjects of statements made in plenary meetings "will normally correspond to the topic then under discussion in accordance with the agreed programme of work". Of course, there is no agreed programme of work. However, it is the right of any member State of the Conference to raise any subject relevant to the work of the Conference at a plenary meeting and to have a full opportunity of presenting its views on any subject which it may consider merits attention.

So, I am quite happy to go with either way here. I have raised and given a full presentation of my views. I am happy to add to those. We have at least two speakers who wish to take the floor, I note. However, in the spirit of compromise and gentlemanly behaviour, I would be quite happy to allow the speakers to go forward and to have that discussion after those on the speakers' list, if that is the desire of the Conference. But I just wanted to make that point.

The President: I invite Mr. Ordzhonikidze, in his capacity as the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, to take the floor.

Mr. Ordzhonikidze (Secretary-General of the Conference): Mr. President, in fact it is at your discretion to give the floor to the representatives of member States that would like to raise certain issues outside of the list of speakers. If you want to give them the floor beforehand, you might do that. If you want to give them floor after the list of speakers is exhausted, again it is your decision. But there is nothing in the rules of procedure that prevents you to take a decision on that issue, and when you gave the floor to the representative of the United Kingdom, I understood that you preferred that he would express his view before the list of speakers started to be exhausted. So, it is a certain flexibility in the rules of procedure, so if we don't have more serious things than interpreting that rule or the other rule of procedure, we can start the substantive discussion on the issue.

The President: Thank you very much, Secretary-General, for your comments. I have listened to all the statements made by delegations just now, and as President, at this stage, I will not offer my observations of a substantive nature on the procedural point raised by the colleagues here just now, but I will reserve the right to come back on it. The purpose of the exercise here, and also the meetings today, is, at least from my perspective, to focus on common ground and in a way to advance the work of the Conference. So this is the rationale behind, and with this in mind, I as the President will propose to take forward and conduct our work today in the following way.

If we have concerns, let's zero in on the concerns. If we have problems, let's work to put behind the problems if we possibly can. So, firstly, I think, given the sentiments and issues raised by the distinguished Ambassadors of the United Kingdom and Germany, I would first focus on this, before proceeding and moving to our discussion on nuclear disarmament. So, having, in terms of substance, heard the comments made by Ambassador Duncan and also the Ambassador of Germany, would any other delegations like to have the floor? Ambassador of Japan, you have the floor.

Mr. Suda (Japan): I think that now the subject is going back to CD/WP.565, which was proposed by the President on Tuesday. As I said at the Tuesday plenary, my view concerning that document or proposal, I didn't say that I opposed that proposal at all, I just asked for some more time to reflect really on the question or some time for the clarification and the views of the President and any other delegates concerning that proposal. One thing, as I said on Tuesday: I would like to know the views of the President and other colleagues

about the good and the positive meaning of holding the informal meeting instead of a plenary meeting on those agenda items, because we remember that last year we had a similar kind of informal meeting on those subjects, but this year, under the Canadian and Chilean Ambassadors' presidency, we have already been through the formal meetings on all these agenda items. So I just wanted to know what is the idea of having informal meetings instead of a formal plenary meeting on these four agenda items. If it is agreed that it is more useful to have informal meetings rather than the formal meetings, certainly I am happy to go along with that kind of view, but I wanted to hear the views of the President and delegates on this point.

And the second point I just raised: this schedule was proposed in a short time, and I just wondered whether many of our delegates would have no problem with the rather intense labour schedule in the coming four weeks. So that is what I said, and I asked for further time to consider these issues. So please don't misunderstand what I said, and I would like to hear the views of the President on your proposal and other delegates on that.

The President: Thank you, Ambassador of Japan. Any other delegations would like to have the further views? I recognize the distinguished Ambassador of the United States.

Ms. Kennedy (United States of America): Thank you, Mr. President, for letting me speak, and again I look forward with great interest to the statements of our Algerian and Philippine colleagues, and I would have been — let me assure you — happy to speak in any order that you suggest, so let me be as brief as possible so we can turn to our Algerian and Philippine colleagues.

I was not here for the outset of your presidency, so let me just say again we look forward very much to working with you. The President, indeed, we believe, should have great scope in trying to guide us forward. With regard to the two proposals I understand were put forward, 565 and 566, as I hope we have always made clear, we are happy to discuss the core issues and all of the agenda items of the Conference thoroughly, to engage on them substantively, whether it be in plenary or informal. So let me restate that, and let me also echo some of the comments that were made by colleagues earlier that, in terms of 565, we also, of course, would have been interested in looking at a more fully fleshed-out version, i.e. who you would propose to be coordinators and also perhaps — well, indeed, look at, for example, how you would characterize the reporting on this. I think that would be something that would merit further discussion.

I am not sure why you would require a coordinator to report in a certain fashion. It seems to me that it would make more sense to have a written report, and indeed that report could be submitted, I would say without prejudice to the positions of various participants rather than, as you currently state, that the report will not affect in any way the positions. That could be read to mean that you're not going to pay any attention to them, whereas indeed, ideally, any of these reports would be of interest and ones that conceivably might have some impact on your thinking.

So, as I say, I just wanted to make clear that we certainly support your efforts to find a sensible way to use the balance of our time here. I would make one final point, however, and say that, of course, this is a negotiating body, and it will be of no surprise to anyone to know that we believe that any programme of work should include a negotiating mandate for a fissile material cut-off treaty, with the Shannon mandate, and in the sense that this is a goal that has been repeatedly endorsed by the international community. I'm well aware, of course, that one State has not agreed that, but it is the one thing out there that commands the greatest and near-universal support. So, thank you very much for allowing me to speak.

The President: Thank you, the distinguished Ambassador from the United States, for your interventions. Any other views on this point in terms of substance? I hope I am right, I recognize none: virtually no delegation to speak on the substance on the point raised

by the distinguished Ambassadors from the United Kingdom and Germany. And also, I think, the Ambassador of Japan explained and complemented, supplemented the statement made by the Ambassadors of the United Kingdom and Germany, echoed some of the sentiments echoed by the Ambassador of the United States. And having recognized that there are no further views, no further requests sought from the floor on this point, I would say the following.

I listened with great, great care to the statement made by the distinguished Ambassador of Japan on 22 March. I listened with great, great care to the statements made by the distinguished Ambassadors from the United Kingdom, Germany, Japan and the United States. While I try to confine myself from flinging accusations at anyone, I nevertheless lament very much the fact that I was compelled at our plenary on 22 March to move to another formula as there are clearly on the record an explicit substantive dispute and difficulty on the part of just one delegation to the formula of informal meetings of the Conference, though other colleagues just need time. But in terms of explicit substantive dispute and difficulty, it just came from one delegation only at that meeting. As you may recall, at our plenary on 22 March, Ambassador Suda from Japan in disputing the Conference document WP.565, said the following:

“... why do we discuss all-important agenda in the form of informal meeting? Because I recall that this is just exactly what we have done last year during the Belgian presidency, and this year, thanks to the leadership of the Canadian and Chilean Ambassadors, we made progress to move from the informal meeting to formal plenary meeting on all important agenda.”

So, let me draw all your attention to the following words of Ambassador Suda. He said:

“... I do not see any particular reason why we have to go back to the precedent we have already done last year, why there would be much added value to repeat that process last year.”

At that juncture, I as President sought any possible further views from the floor, while recognizing no request sought from the floor. I subsequently said:

“As I see none, I will continue my response to the three delegates, that is, Japan, Germany and Italy.”

After I briefly responded to Italy and Germany, I stated the following:

“... what I’m particularly concerned about are, in fact, the inputs, to which I attach great importance by Ambassador Akio. He just said that he not only just needs time, but also, I think, he virtually has difficulties, expressed doubts and seeks to dispute the format of the meetings I tried to schedule, that is, informal meetings, though I think I have already made abundantly clear in my numerous bilateral consultations, and also based on established practice and the consensual approach, that is non-controversial. But since I think the distinguished Ambassador of Japan has difficulties to see the format of informal meetings, arrangement I envisaged in my proposal as I put to you, as contained in document CD/WP.565, I think it’s my impression, my understanding, clearly [let me stress “clearly”], on the basis of such inputs from Japan, there is no consensus in this chamber at this stage on the proposal I put to you, as contained in document CD/WP.565. So, given that, I will not – I conclude I will not proceed on this basis.”

And, as I may recall, based on the above, I subsequently stated the following:

“Since we have to start work without missing time, and given that the proposal I tried, which I believe is good for all delegations, especially to enable participation by all countries in the relevant processes, may it be on FMCT or other core issues, I,

as President, will always remain as open, facilitative and accommodative as possible. I will stand ready to be guided by the member States, especially their decisions. So, having said this, I will now alternatively propose another formula.”

So, this is exactly the verbatim words and minutes of the proceedings from the plenary of 22 March. This is not what I am saying now, this is what the other delegation said and how I responded the other day. Though at the time we virtually already put behind us CD/WP.565 and we moved to discussions on my alternative formula, as contained in document CD/WP.566, Ambassador Suda did say that I, as President, “interpreted” what he said about this proposal in CD/WP.565, and that he “just asked questions”. At this particular juncture, I cautioned him that “that is the ground we have virtually already traversed”, with the caveat that we are already on CD/WP.566 and that I need to ensure the normal functions of me as the President.

This is what happened on 22 March in the Council chamber. With due respect, I should say that facts are facts, which are not for interpretation. They are virtually established, in our case, in the verbatim minutes of our plenary meeting on 22 March.

While I regret that the United States should have had expressed the views they have just expressed the other day, while we were on CD/WP.565, nevertheless, I appreciate very much the sentiments of Washington for informals as they have just expressed now. While lamenting the missed opportunity, on 22 March, for channelling all efforts and activities into the Conference for, inter alia, FMCT informal meetings with the participation of all members, I remain hopeful that all Conference members will, in a concerted effort, continue to explore an earliest agreed programme of work for the Conference. Let’s adopt a forward-looking attitude. Having said this, I now wish to move our discussions on nuclear disarmament.

I recognize the distinguished Ambassador from Japan.

Mr. Suda (Japan): Well, I don’t think it is very good to continue this kind of unproductive discussion between the President and some delegates, but I have to reiterate, after I was mentioned many times by the President, what I said on the Tuesday and what I said today. You made your own interpretation of what I said. As I said, maybe you are right in your record that I asked about some points regarding your proposal on CD/565, but I never said I had difficulty in accepting this proposal, or that I oppose this proposal, but I said because I have such a question, I need time, as other delegates requested. But I haven’t heard any answer to the questions I put from the President, and you didn’t give any answer to my question again today. So it is a very unilateral interpretation of our statement by my delegate, and I cannot accept this kind of allegation for unilateral interpretation of my statement. So please, I think there should be more productive discussion, exchanges out of plenary and in the informal way, bilateral or consultative way outside of the plenary, about your proposal: the first one, the alternative one and any other proposal. But I don’t think it is good for this Conference, which is already in a difficult situation, to continue this kind of unproductive exchange.

The President: Distinguished Ambassador of Brazil.

Mr. Macedo Soares (Brazil): Mr. President. I feel forced to intervene because it seems that you are having a dialogue with a group of delegations, and I feel forced to intervene because your original proposal in CD/WP.565 contains, among other things, but very dear to me, my name. And it is there because I had accepted your suggestion, so it means, and I have no need to say, that your proposal in 565 met with the support of my delegation, and it continues to merit our support. It seems, and I say “it seems”, that one group had difficulties with that proposal. A little bit strange because last year, the same kind of proposal was pushed into the Conference as a whole and it was accepted, but we all remember that it was at the insistence of perhaps that very group that on Tuesday 22 March,

showed if not a red light, a yellow light to your proposal. And now that group is showing a green light. I don't think that we are here just to wait for one group to take a position. For my part, I just want to assure you of the support of my delegation to that proposal or to every effort you may make in order to adopt a programme of work for the Conference on Disarmament.

The President: Thank you, the distinguished Ambassador of Brazil. I recognize the distinguished Ambassador of Algeria.

Mr. Jazaïry (Algeria): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and abiding by the advice given by our distinguished Secretary-General, I am sorry to have caused some unease by making a suggestion that we were not discussing a point of order, therefore we should follow the business as you had yourself suggested this morning. But, be that as it may, the proposal that you made in document CD/WP.565 was a document which was reminiscent of the document that we negotiated, and I was personally involved in negotiating this text, under the Belgian presidency. It was not something that was altogether new. We want to get on with the business if we can on the basis of 565, then that's fine. If there was a misunderstanding that the distinguished representative of Japan did not really object as he was understood to have objected according to your vision of what happened, that's all to the good. I think what I would suggest is that, now we've had this exchange, that we put this as a subject to be discussed outside this hall, informally, as we usually do in the Human Rights Council: we get on with our business, and I am sure that at the next meeting when we meet again, we will have a deal on this one, knowing the spirit of compromise and mutual accommodation that has always existed in the Conference.

I don't think it would be helpful to continue the discussion at this stage. Let's give quiet diplomacy some time to work it out under your very able guidance. I am sure that – I mean, we are all bothered because there is now probably more consensus than we thought there was on the 22nd; we should rejoice that we are moving towards a greater convergence. So, give this informal diplomacy a chance, and I suggest that through the traditional channels, you consult with all those that have concerns that they have expressed today and find a solution at the next meeting, and that we now conclude this discussion.

The President: Thank you, Ambassador, for your pertinent advice and also for your substantive comments. I recognize the Ambassador of France.

Mr. Danon (France) (*spoke in French*): Our discussion today demonstrates that we need to return to a spirit of compromise regarding the continuation of our work. I support the suggestion of my friend, the Ambassador of Algeria, that a few additional consultations in the format you find most appropriate, Mr. President, will enable us to come up with a solution that is acceptable for everyone in time for the next session, or the session after that should we require a little more time, and that the tension that can be felt in the chamber at this time needs to be mitigated because, in short, it really serves no purpose.

So, let us return to a few additional consultations outside this chamber, in a format you find appropriate, and with which the Conference is familiar, so that we can re-establish an environment more propitious to the substantive work which we all wish to see continue.

I am taking the floor as a representative of my country but as it happens, by coincidence, I am also coordinator of the Group of Western European and Other States. The Group does not take part in the Conference in its own right and I would not want there to be any ambiguity on this point after the comment made by my friend, the Ambassador from Brazil; there is no group dialogue with the Group of Western European and Other States, and countries other than those belonging to the Group — I am thinking of an African country in particular — also requested additional time at the meeting on the 22nd. For this reason I do not believe it is helpful to say that the discussion is between the President and one particular group of countries. This is not the situation we are seeing here. Once again, I

believe we all need to calm down a little and return to a situation where we take the most constructive approach possible. We would all prefer this to what is happening here now, which, as the Ambassador from Algeria said, is a situation we need to bring to an end as quickly as possible.

The President: Thank you, Ambassador of France, and now I recognize the Ambassador of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Duncan (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): My apologies again to Ambassadors Jazaïry and Garcia. I agree very much with what Ambassador Jazaïry has said about getting on with our business, but I'll come back to my doubts as to whether we will achieve that by a further round of exchanging views.

You say, Mr. Chairman, that facts are facts, but no one has a monopoly on the truth. As we say in English, "Where you stand depends on where you sit". I hope the translators had fun with that one. And in reiteration to what our French colleague has just said, I would like to assure my good friend the Brazilian Ambassador that there is no question of groups blocking things. We are, on the contrary – it happens to be in this debate, a lot from the Western group, but on Tuesday we had a fairly cross-regional discussion in which, according to my facts and truth, no one said no. So, I'm not sure that I would concur with your interpretation that you have circulated round with us.

Not to hold us up any longer, I think the thing I would like to say here is that the key issue, as I said on Tuesday, is the quality of discourse in this body which would allow us to achieve a meaningful outcome. From the United Kingdom perspective, we do not believe that a further exchange of views on these issues under WP.566 has a clear purpose. We have twice done that this year and it builds on (if we want to be optimistic), or simply refreshes (if we want to be a bit more cynical), what we did three years ago. It is for that reason that we have been interested in the side event organized by our esteemed colleagues of Japan and Australia, because it is deepening discussion in a structured manner on the FMCT and might lead to some more meaningful outcome than simply an exchange of views. If the Conference was to apply a similar sort of model to the key issues on our agenda, perhaps we would make some more progress. Regrettably, we have not done something similar, and I fear that we are in the process of falling some way short of what the General Assembly expects of us.

And that, I hope, is clear enough. I tried to make that clear on Tuesday, but I hope that is now clear enough for all colleagues. We wish to see meaningful structured discussion, not an exchange of views, leading to some outcome that will in some way respond to the mandate given to us by our colleagues at the General Assembly, a body to which we all attach considerable importance. But I will stop there and follow the very good and sage advice of our Algerian colleague and allow further exchanges of views to take place.

The President: I have duly taken note of the intervention you made, Ambassador of the United Kingdom. So at this stage, I will say that from especially what has been stated on 22 March, it's very clear that the status of the paper, of the document containing CD/WP.565, is very clear. The Council does not have consensus on this paper, especially I think, clearly I think, because of the statement to the effect that one delegation does not see any particular reason why we should go back to the precedent we have already done last year, and also his query and the question whether there should be much additional value to repeat that process last year. So, clearly on this, I think there is no consensus in this room, and so when we move to the document as contained in CD/WP.566, the status for document 565 is already clear, and also what I want to draw your attention to is that, as you may recall, as you may check the minutes, the verbatim minutes of the plenary on 22 March, especially following the questions from the distinguished Ambassador of Germany, I put to

him two options. One is to defer our decision on 566 to Thursday plenary, that is today, or, alternatively, if he does not seek to dispute, or I do not have objections from the floor, I would proceed accordingly. So, having recognized that there are no requests from the floor, I proceed accordingly. So, on the basis of all our colleagues' advice, I'm not going to continue further discussion as such, but rather than what I said, that we should adopt a forward-looking attitude, and now I will propose the following.

Firstly, I think since the status of the paper 566 is clear, equally I think it's clear with the status of document 565, so we should continue on the basis of the document as contained in CD/WP.566 unless additional dispute be sought from the floor. And secondly, that procedurally, while working on the basis of CD/WP.566, I as President will remain as facilitative and as accommodative as possible and open to any suggestions of member States for other good ways to advance the work of the Conference. So I think that, while working on the basis of 566, perhaps I envisage that if there are any further mature thoughts from the member States, then I think we can continue our work. The Conference can't work in a chaotic situation. What is agreed is agreed. And if I think we could continue our work on the basis of what is agreed, and in parallel to explore any further ways to enhance the work, that would be helpful. And that is exactly the rationale why China, not only in its capacity as the President, but also in its national capacities, has worked and put enormous and extra efforts into producing the paper 565, which I believe, in fact, that not only I think helpful to the Conference process with the participation of all Conference members, but also I think represents the delicate balance in political terms, in technical terms and in procedural terms. I do think that represents the delicate balance, especially from what has transpired in my numerous bilateral consultations. So, that's why we tried so hard. We would like to see informal meetings take place in the Conference with the participation of all delegations, inter alia on FMCT.

So, having said that, I would like to move to our discussion on nuclear disarmament. The floor is open.

A point of order; the distinguished delegate of Germany.

Mr. Hoffmann (Germany): Well, since you mentioned this delegation again, I would really like to put on record how I feel about what you have just discussed, if I may.

The President: I would suggest you first check the verbatim records before I think plunging the Conference in a discussion which is leading nowhere, but rather I think we should focus our discussions in a way that everyone would like in terms of substance. So I would, unless you insist, I would hope you check the verbatim records first before coming back. Anyway, I think you always have the right under rule 30 to say whatever you want as long as they are relevant, as long as it's consistent with the rules of procedure. Yes, please.

Mr. Hoffmann (Germany): Well, Mr. President, can I then make a statement under rule 30? Thank you very much, Mr. President.

This is in the light of my own experience of some time, a rather unusual experience. I would agree with you that the Conference cannot work in a chaotic situation. Can I say for the record, just to go back again at what has happened?

You introduced on Tuesday document 565. This proposal was not complete; to start with, it still had blanks. Some delegations raised questions about this proposal and asked for more time to consider it. I was among those who had actually asked for more time to consider it. I have to say I was a bit surprised that you seemed to have the alternative already in your pocket, because you already had prepared the alternative.

Now you ruled, although I myself, when you presented your alternative, I again asked for more time. It was you, as President, who ruled and said that you would adopt your alternative approach. There was no need for that whatsoever, there was no need for

that haste. And now today, in this discussion, the Ambassadors of Algeria and of France have again said: “Why don’t we look at this matter?” And again you do not seem to be interested in arriving at a solution which is acceptable to all, which could be found in informal consultations.

So, it is as if you would prefer to have the second alternative, because there is ample opportunity to discuss whatever kind of timetable we wanted to adopt. So, you yourself seem to have a preference for 566. I cannot read it in any other way.

The President: I think you can’t – whatever you say, the facts are not for interpretation. You can’t change the very facts based on the minutes, based on the verbatim minutes.

Distinguished representative of Russia.

Mr. Vasiliev (Russian Federation): I’ll speak for the brief time in English. First of all, since this is my first time to take the floor under your presidency, let me congratulate you, President, on your election and, of course, you can count on the full support of my delegation.

Having heard the discussion today and on Tuesday, I have to say for the record that as far as the Russian delegation is concerned, we were ready to support your document CD/WP.565 and, of course, we will be more than happy to see Ambassador Soares mentioned once or twice or even thrice in the context of that document. We value his expertise and support, and thank you for that. We also can support document CD/WP.566 presented by your delegation as a basis, and we take those two documents as your contribution, as your effort to move the Conference forward, and we really appreciate that effort.

But having heard the discussion today, it looks like we don’t have consensus or support for both of these documents. So, I believe that the best way to proceed on that front is to reconvene maybe in an informal setting, so that we can find common ground where we stand, and I don’t think that we can dig more in the verbatim records — what was said by whom — that we will progress on that front. At the same time, since it was already announced that we are going to have a plenary meeting today and we have at least two speakers in the list of speakers, maybe for courtesy reasons, we can give them a chance to speak and to address us, since they were preparing for that meeting, and later reconvene in an informal setting to continue this discussion. It can be convened immediately after this plenary meeting, or later on at your disposal.

The President: So thank you very much, distinguished representative of the Russian Federation. It is my understanding that firstly the status of document CD/WP.565, the status of that document is clear, as guided by member States as what I have concluded on the basis of the substantive inputs from delegations at that time. Since at that time I do not think clearly from the record, that it is clearly on the record there is no consensus, but as President, I always, as I repeated, say that I remain open-minded to any suggestions and delegations – they may have second thoughts or whatever. And, having listened very carefully to the statements from all delegations, it’s my impression as of now that no delegation seeks or supports CD document 565. Is it correct? If that’s the case, that I think, since I think this document, in terms of substance — if all agree, then I think the only question is how to treat the first week of the schedule of activities, and so I would say that perhaps in terms, since we’ve already — a point of order? Yes, please.

Mr. El-Atawy (Egypt): Thank you very much, Mr. President and, since it is the first time, let me guarantee Your Excellency our full support for your presidency and our support to all the proposals that you have submitted, whether on document 565 or 566.

The point of order is basically because I am not really sure about the proposal that you have just posed to the Conference. You are asking about the status of which document exactly? If there is support or no support? I was not very clear about that point. If Your Excellency can repeat it, it would be very much appreciated by this delegation.

The President: Thank you very much, our colleague from Egypt. In fact, as you may recall, on 22 March in our plenary, firstly I think, given the no-consensus on document 565, and secondly, given that no dispute arose to seek the second formula I came up with and put to members, which also I put through the regional coordinators to consult all members, Monday, last Monday, so I decided to work accordingly on the basis of 566. So, that's the explanation. And, since I said that let's – while we agreed on the formula we envisaged, and also in the meantime, I also said that we hope that if we could focus on the common denominators, and also by adopting a forward-looking attitude, especially from what has been transpiring in this room as of now, I think nobody virtually seeks to dispute the ideas or the thrusts as contained in document 565. So, if that's the case, I think I, as President, will remain to be guided by the views, by the decisions of member States.

Maybe, if not on a point of order, I will finish my statement before I give the floor to the distinguished Ambassador of Algeria.

So, I think we have to work on the basis of 566 right now to continue our discussions on nuclear disarmament and in parallel, and – this is one option, this is an option, option 1: I propose to you, and hope that you could confirm this. Secondly, I would alternatively put to you the suggestion that if you think that the thrust of document 565 is agreeable to you, then we adopt this document today, if you wish, with the understanding that the first, I think, in terms of substance, of the arrangement of four core issues, in the nature of informals, will be scheduled in the week starting from the next week, and I think we, as President, will be guided by member States, if that's the wish of member States.

So, two options: one is first to finish today's discussions on 566, and then I think, in parallel, we will explore whatever things without prejudice, and before any new decisions, we will continue to work on 566 as agreed. And, secondly that, since everyone likes the paper 565 so much, so I will maybe, I think, adjourn the meeting for 10 minutes with new schedules by having all the informal meetings, substantive informal meetings, on the four core issues as 567 starting from the week, starting from the second week of China's presidency.

First, I give the floor to the distinguished Ambassador of Algeria.

Mr. Jazaïry (Algeria): Mr. President, I think there is not a lot of difference between members on how we should proceed. I think that many have taken the floor to indicate additional convergence today. Some have said that they are still not ready to take a final stand, but there does not seem to be any fundamental divergence as far as I could see. To press the point now to come to a decision may be counterproductive. What I suggest is that, through quiet diplomacy and informal contacts, that you actually meet outside this setting, with the different coordinators and countries interested, the way you have done so well up to now, but extending to all those interested, and I am sure that we can come next time with an agreement. If you find that through these contacts there is still some delegation that needs additional time, so be it. In the meantime, we continue with the statements, but I think that it is likely that we will reach agreement, but I don't think we will reach it in this kind of assembly, whether formal or informal. I think the process should be as suggested by me earlier.

One other alternative would be to suspend and have a huddle here and see if we can reach an understanding, but because some delegations have said that they still needed to interact with their capitals, I think the wisest course of action was the one that I suggested earlier, which was supported by France and Russia, and nobody objected to it, so I suggest

we just proceed on that basis. We return to this question after you've had these consultations and, in the meantime, we proceed with the statements that have been listed, listening to those speakers who might express the intention to take the floor today.

The President: Thank you, Ambassador of Algeria, and I think the two options you proposed are exactly, I think, what I shared with the other delegations and put to members, and that's exactly the way I tried to conduct the business and how I want to take forward matters. And, so, anything new? Or because you want to say something now? Please.

Mr. Hernández Basave (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I don't know whether this falls under rule 30 or not but I am unable to refrain from making a statement to the effect that it is clear that the resources of the Conference on Disarmament are exhausted. This absurd procedural debate which we have had demonstrates that the resources of the Conference on Disarmament have dried up. For Mexico it is clear that the importance that this Conference on Disarmament once had is a thing of the past.

We should not forget that seated here at this time are distinguished ambassadors, plenipotentiaries and representatives of the five permanent members of the Security Council as well as ambassadors from some of the countries that are non-permanent members of the Security Council. At this point in time, Mexico has itself just concluded another term as a non-permanent member of the Security Council.

Also seated here are ambassadors, representatives and plenipotentiaries of G-8 and G-20 countries which have sought to be leaders in our regions, in our groups, in our spheres of influence, and perhaps this is why we are members of the Conference on Disarmament, perhaps because we thought that the Conference on Disarmament would have a part to play.

I would like to point out that Article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations confers upon the permanent and non-permanent members of the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and calls for urgent action on the part of the United Nations General Assembly to address the threats to international peace and security. I believe no one can doubt that nuclear disarmament and conventional disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation are issues related to international peace and security. The days when we discussed and debated issues related to international peace and security in this Conference are long gone; we can see how the world is being destabilized in these times of revolution in various places, in various regions, and here we are bogged down in procedural debates.

We, the delegation of Mexico, would like to take this procedural debate, and the frame of mind in which we all of us find ourselves at this moment, as an opportunity to urge the members of the Conference on Disarmament to reflect on the importance of seeking alternatives to nuclear disarmament, to arms control, to advances in the areas under our remit that will enable us to ensure greater international security in the world and to contribute to the peace of our planet as a whole.

The President: Thank you very much for your statement. So, I turn to the list of speakers on nuclear disarmament. In parallel, if I think, in the course of the work during China's presidency, we as the President are open to any suggestions, whatever ways to channel all the activities and our efforts into the Conference for focused, for substantive and more interactive dialogue or exchange whatsoever on whatever the core issues, we will do our best as we have done.

The distinguished Ambassador of the Philippines.

Mr. Garcia (Philippines): On behalf of the Informal Group of Observer States of the Conference on Disarmament (IGOS), I would like to convey our collective congratulations to you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the Conference presidency. Your extensive experience and acumen will serve us well in the coming weeks.

We wish to take this opportunity to convey our gratitude for the highly encouraging statement you had made upon your commencement of your presidency on 22 March, wherein you had *inter alia* recognized the role of the observer States in the work of the Conference, and welcomed examination of the expansion issue in the Conference. Likewise, we wish to take this opportunity to thank your predecessors in the Conference presidency, the Ambassadors of Chile and Canada, for consulting with IGOS and for championing our concerns in the Conference. We would also like to express our deep appreciation to the Ambassador of the Russian Federation for expressing the view that the prestige of the Conference may be enhanced by a step-by-step expansion of membership and for proposing the holding of a plenary session of the Conference devoted to the issue of membership expansion.

IGOS respectfully reiterates that our call for the appointment of a special rapporteur is merely to commence a serious discussion on this issue, and not to prejudge or presume any particular outcome, following the precedent set by the Conference in 2001. We wish to convey our profuse thanks to the Ambassador of Brazil for his counsel and support in this regard. Our gratitude also goes to the numerous delegations which have also spoken in favour of examining the issue of expansion in the Conference.

Mr. President, IGOS welcomes the statement you made last week which outlines your perspectives and ideas for the way ahead for the Conference. Let us recall your exhortation to us that we should “never negotiate out of fear. But let us never fear to negotiate”, a quotation from the late President John F. Kennedy, as cited by Your Excellency and other delegates, and your own apt analogy that we, both members and observers, are all “sailing in the same boat and helping each other”. Indeed, the Chinese presidency and the rest of the P-6 can count on IGOS’s full support for the Conference to begin its substantive work as soon as possible.

The President: Thank you for your statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. And now I give the floor to the distinguished Ambassador from Algeria.

Mr. Jazāiry (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): First of all I would like to say how pleased I am, Ambassador Wang Qun, that you have assumed the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. We have no doubt that your great skill and your renowned professionalism, not to mention your country’s commitment to global peace and security, will contribute to the success of our liberations.

I would also like to thank your predecessor the Ambassador of Chile, Mr. Pedro Oyarce, for the tremendous efforts that he made as President of the Conference.

The Algerian delegation would like to take the floor today to reaffirm the importance of nuclear disarmament, an issue that we have discussed at length a number of times since the beginning of this session. We listened with great interest to the substantial points raised by the various delegations that participated in the discussion on this topic during the presidencies of Canada and Chile.

From these discussions, it has emerged that the supreme objective of achieving nuclear disarmament remains a universal cause, on which no objection from any side has been noted. This is a major point, which must be highlighted. The differences of opinion have to do with the approaches or policies to be pursued in order to achieve this objective.

The fact is that the international community identified, by consensus, in the final document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament in 1978, the approach to be followed, which can be summarized as follows:

1. Cessation of the qualitative improvement of nuclear-weapon systems, and cessation of their use.

2. Cessation of the production of all types of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery, and of the production of fissile materials.

3. Establishment of a comprehensive, phased programme with agreed time frames for progressive and balanced reduction of stockpiles of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery, leading to their ultimate and complete elimination at the earliest possible time.

At the special session the Conference on Disarmament was established as a body responsible for negotiation on disarmament, including the aforementioned issues. Today, there is an urgent and legitimate need to work together to rid the entire human race of the risk of mass annihilation that threatens it. The risks posed by nuclear radiation leaking from the nuclear reactors at Fukushima in the wake of the huge disaster that befell our fellow country, Japan, is a reminder for us of the serious consequences that await us in the event of a nuclear war or of an accident involving nuclear weapons.

Nuclear weapons continue to represent a threat to peace and stability and to threaten mass annihilation, because of the massive accumulation of nuclear arsenals and the re-emergence of dangerous defence doctrines and policies on the use of such weapons.

It is time for the international community, and the nuclear Powers, in particular, to shoulder the responsibilities that they took upon themselves at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, by making swift and palpable progress towards nuclear disarmament, according to the steps set out clearly in the final document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference, particularly given their unambiguous commitment to the total elimination of these weapons.

In this regard, I would also like to recall the advisory opinion issued by the International Court of Justice in July 1996, in which the Court unanimously concluded that there exists an obligation to pursue and to negotiate on nuclear disarmament. To avoid or fail in these obligations presents risks for the entire non-proliferation regime with regard to weapons of mass destruction.

There are many useful proposals and ideas from which we can draw inspiration, including the five-point proposal of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on nuclear disarmament, including on a nuclear weapons convention, and on a proposal by Costa Rica and Malaysia on a Model Nuclear Weapons Convention.

In this context, the Conference on Disarmament could contribute to attaining our common goal. The delegation of Algeria emphasizes the importance of adopting a programme of work without delay. Doing so would enable us to establish a subsidiary body on nuclear disarmament in accordance with General Assembly resolution 65/56 on nuclear disarmament.

In this regard, I would like to recall the workplan on the elimination of nuclear weapons within a defined time frame that the Non-Aligned Movement submitted to the 2010 NPT Review Conference. The plan contains sets of measures and practical steps that would ultimately lead, by 2025, to the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

The President: Thank you, Ambassador, for your important statement on this topic. And now I recognize the distinguished representative of Pakistan. You have the floor.

Mr. Khan (Pakistan): In all the Conference debates, both formal and informal, Pakistan has clearly stated its position on nuclear disarmament. For the Conference, nuclear disarmament is the fundamental issue around which all other issues revolve. The Conference was conceived to pursue the disarmament agenda, to avert nuclear war and to seek measures for equal security of all. Total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only guarantee to secure durable peace and security for all. The most effective and credible way

to stop and prevent the nuclear arms race is transparent, irreversible and verifiable nuclear disarmament. We wish to repeat what has been stated repeatedly by the vast majority of the Conference members. In objective terms, if a broad consensus exists on any single disarmament issue amongst the international community, it is on making tangible progress towards nuclear disarmament.

Although in recent years the world has changed dramatically, the change has not been adequately reflected in the control and elimination of nuclear weapons. The dangerous stability of mutual assured destruction has been replaced by a less fearsome, but more uncertain multipolar world. Today, when history is hurtling ahead, we need to pause and reflect on the reasons and consequences of our inertia and inaction on nuclear disarmament. Since there are no strategic confrontations playing out amongst major Powers at present, is it not wiser to seize the opportunity to prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons?

Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are the two sides of the same coin. Nuclear non-proliferation gains its legitimacy as a goal because it is meant to facilitate the larger aim of nuclear disarmament. Non-proliferation is not meant to ensure the continued possession of nuclear weapons by powerful States. The NPT was not meant to divide the world perpetually into States that possess nuclear weapons and those that do not. This treaty was a transitional arrangement, initially for a period of 25 years, to enable the nuclear Powers to negotiate the measures for nuclear disarmament. The promise contained in article VI of the NPT, to promote nuclear disarmament, is not a concession by nuclear-weapon States, it is an obligation which is at least as crucial to non-proliferation as the commitment of its non-nuclear parties to refrain from developing nuclear weapons. Yet what we see today is that most of the nuclear-weapon States perceive the indefinite extension of the NPT as a licence for their indefinite possession of nuclear weapons. To us, this brings out the flawed nature of the NPT.

Moreover, the focus on non-proliferation should not be only on horizontal proliferation, but must also take into account the threats posed by vertical proliferation, since it compounds uncertainties and instabilities and spurs new strategic competition.

Pakistan is convinced that the international community can best pursue the imperative of nuclear disarmament in the Conference. Nuclear disarmament is a key subject for negotiations, and the Conference is the appropriate forum where such negotiations should be conducted. This remains a priority for the Conference. Contrary to an erroneous impression being created about the centrality of the so-called FMCT for the work of the Conference, it is negotiations for nuclear disarmament that constitute the litmus test for the Conference's success.

The President: Any other delegations want to take the floor at this stage on this subject? The distinguished representative from Iran, you have the floor.

Mr. Daryaei (Islamic Republic of Iran): Thank you very much, Mr. President. I take this opportunity to congratulate you on the assumption of the post as the President of the Conference on Disarmament. I assure you of the full cooperation of my delegation.

Since the main topic is nuclear disarmament, we always raised this issue that our top priority in the Conference is nuclear disarmament. The production and possession of nuclear weapons under whatever pretext is illegal, illegitimate, inhuman and a very dangerous act which first and foremost makes the country of production and stockpiling exposed. You may recall how perilous was the inadvertent transfer of a nuclear-tipped missile with a bomber from a military base to another one in one nuclear-weapon State, which became a matter of serious concern, first and foremost for its people.

Secondly, the sole function of nuclear weapons is indiscriminate annihilation of all living beings, irreparable destruction of the environment and permanent irremediable radiation effect that seriously endangers the coming generation of the countries.

The tragic tsunami in Japan showed how vulnerable we are in the case of deliberate use of nuclear weapons, in the case of accidental use of nuclear weapons and in the case of damage that might cause to the storage of nuclear weapons in the case of natural disasters. So, we have to move towards nuclear disarmament. The nuclear weapon is a fire against humanity rather than a weapon for defence. The possession of nuclear weapons is not a source of pride. It's rather disgusting and shameful, and even more shameful is to use or threaten to use such weapons, which is not even comparable to any crime committed throughout history.

The NPT did not provide a right for nuclear-weapon States to keep their nuclear arsenals indefinitely. They have an obligation for the total elimination of these weapons, as enshrined in article VI of the NPT, which has yet to be fulfilled. The advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice underlined clearly that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. In the NPT Review Conference, the Non-Aligned Movement proposed the adoption of a legal framework with a specified timeline for the total elimination of nuclear weapons by 2025. We are still of the firm conviction that concrete and clear action is needed in order to realize that goal.

It is regrettable that a long time after the cold war, military alliances based on the nuclear umbrella exist. Nuclear sharing continues, and deployment of nuclear weapons in the territory of other non-nuclear-weapon States is exercised. So it is high time that the Conference on Disarmament would establish an ad hoc committee to start its negotiation, as proposed by our Foreign Minister, of a nuclear weapon convention as a matter of priority, and this convention can include the following elements: banning the production, development and use or threat of use of nuclear weapons; second, renouncing the deterrence values of nuclear weapons in all defence doctrines; third, prevention of deployment of nuclear weapons in all areas, namely on the ground, under water, in space and outer space; fourth, banning the production of all fissile material for military purposes; fifth, declaring all stocks of weapons-grade fissile material and their elimination in an irreversible manner within an agreed time frame; sixth, declaring all warheads and de-alerting them in a verifiable manner; and seventh, elimination of nuclear warheads in a phased programme and in an irreversible manner within a specified time frame.

The President: Thank you for your statement, distinguished representative of Iran. I recognize the Ambassador of the United Kingdom. You have the floor.

Mr. Duncan (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): I very much welcome the important statements made under this subject. I won't go back and restate the comments and positions of the United Kingdom that we have made clear at least twice this year.

However, I would like to respond to some of the comments made in the room today, because I think it has a relevance to our programme of work. But first I would like to very much agree with my colleague from Mexico on the importance of moving forward, a view that I very much share. I am not sure that our procedural debate was not one that actually hid some substance, but I very much agree with what he was saying: we must move forward. Turning to our esteemed colleague from Pakistan, Pakistan very much a friend of the United Kingdom: as he comments about the vast majority of the Conference membership, the vast majority of the Conference membership are indeed members of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and they have signed up to a legally binding obligation. Indeed, it is not a concession, it is a legally binding obligation to disarm; but there is no inertia or

inaction. Seventy-five per cent of the world's nuclear arsenals have been destroyed in the past 20 years, and we are moving forward. Those in the P-5, the nuclear-weapon States of the NPT, have all signed up to a world without nuclear weapons. And as I said yesterday, in order to achieve that, we need to have a commitment from all to disarm, we need to have a commitment not to test, and we need a commitment not to produce.

Turning to the esteemed colleague and friend from Algeria, picking up similar points: I do not agree that there is any stepping backwards. I think I would endorse, we must not step backwards. Again, the majority of the members of this organization are members of the NPT, and in May last year, we agreed an Action Plan across all three pillars for the very first time. I am not sure that it is particularly productive in the Conference to pretend that the NPT does not exist because it's inconvenient for some and to try and revisit the issues which were discussed at huge length for over a month in New York last year. And I would make this comment to our Iranian colleague.

But from the nuclear-weapon State — and I am not speaking on behalf of the P-5, but I know that we share this view — we accept these obligations in the Action Plan, and we are moving forward to put them into effect. The P-5 will meet in a conference in Paris in June to do precisely that. I think it would be a good thing for the Conference members, both NPT members and non-NPT members, to reflect on the Action Plan, and I note particularly Action 6 – a subsidiary body to be created to deal with nuclear disarmament. I have not heard that; it is something we have all signed up to bar four members. Action 7 – to immediately begin discussion of effective arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, to discuss substantively, without limitation, with a view to elaborating recommendations dealing with all aspects of this issue, not excluding internationally legally binding instruments. We have all signed up to this. Where is it in the papers that we discuss in this body? Action 15 is the one that we have got stuck on, which is deliberately aimed at us, which is the FMCT.

So, in taking forward the debate on nuclear disarmament, what would interest the United Kingdom would be to learn from the non-nuclear-weapon States what it is they intend to do to carry out their obligations. I think this would be an interesting debate and one which would help us all understand how we are moving forward on disarmament, non-proliferation and civil use.

So, I will conclude at that point, Mr. Chairman, but I look forward to further discussion of these important issues, and I hope that you will take account of what I've said in looking at your programme of work.

The President: Thank you for your statement. I recognize the distinguished representative of South Africa.

Mr. Combrink (South Africa): My delegation did not plan on taking this floor this morning, as we have already expressed our views on this important issue during previous plenary debates, but given the comments made this morning, we would like to make some comments.

Firstly, Mr. President, allow me to congratulate you on assuming the presidency of the Conference. We are at an important juncture in the history of the Conference, given the continued deadlock and the increasingly sterile debate that has characterized our work over the last number of years. The lack of progress in the nuclear disarmament arena for more than a decade has not only prevented the Conference from contributing to a more peaceful and secure international environment, but has also served to undermine international confidence in this important multilateral disarmament forum.

Nuclear disarmament remains a priority for South Africa. Our commitment has found expression, not only in the statements that we have made at the various international

forums, but has also been concretized through practical measures that resulted in the elimination of the nuclear weapons programme of the apartheid regime. The priority that we accord to nuclear disarmament is a priority that is shared by members of the Non-Aligned Movement, the G-21 and the vast majority of Conference members across all regional groups. But commitments at a rhetorical level are meaningless. Many in this chamber, including the nuclear-weapon States and those that remain outside the NPT, have expressed a commitment to the achievement of a nuclear-weapon-free world. However, beyond progress in bilateral nuclear arms reduction efforts, and despite these being of significant importance, we are yet to see these commitments translated into concrete actions that conform to the principles of nuclear disarmament, and those are irreversibility, transparency and verifiability.

Like our United Kingdom Ambassador, we would like to recall the decisions that were made last year during the NPT Review Conference under the nuclear disarmament Action Plan. It is worth mentioning that with only a few exceptions, the vast majority of members of the Conference on Disarmament and all the NPT States parties supported this important outcome. Significantly, the 2010 NPT Review Conference confirmed the unequivocal undertaking of the nuclear-weapon States towards nuclear disarmament. My delegation has not heard any objection to this goal from any of the non-NPT States in the Conference. In fact, most of them are on record as supporting the total elimination of nuclear weapons. It is therefore a contradiction — and this raises questions about the sincerity of these commitments — that the Conference has remained unable to agree on the establishment of a subsidiary body to deal with nuclear disarmament in accordance with the Conference's mandate as a multilateral disarmament negotiating forum.

The President: Thank you very much for your important statement, the distinguished representative of South Africa. And now I recognize the distinguished Ambassador of the United States. You have the floor.

Ms. Kennedy (United States of America): I wish to again thank both the Ambassador and distinguished colleagues from the Philippines and Algeria for their patience before we got to their statements, both indeed very thoughtful. And turning to that made by Ambassador Jazaïry when he, of course, referred to the Secretary-General's proposal in which he discussed the notion of a framework convention, as he did indeed, we would point out that he has also discussed an alternative method of getting to a shared goal of a world without nuclear weapons, and that is a framework of step-by-step, mutually reinforcing actions to get towards that.

We have made many, many statements, I believe, in terms of nuclear disarmament and our vision, so I will not recapitulate that here, other than to say indeed, in terms of nuclear disarmament, it is a goal that we firmly endorse, not as part of our NPT obligations, as part of our Administration policy, and I am happy to say that the START Treaty, a significant step forward, which was negotiated here in Geneva, is ratified, beginning implementation, bilateral consultative commission will shortly begin its work. I know that my Administration is doing its homework, we call it, or preparatory work for another round. We would like to begin, as soon as it makes sense, a reduction in strategic and non-strategic deployed and non-deployed nuclear weapons. My distinguished colleague from the United Kingdom referred to the importance of taking steps in terms of cutting off testing and production. We look forward to the ratification of the CTBT. We are doing all the necessary work to prepare the ground for a successful Senate ratification debate and delighted to hear the statements made in support of nuclear disarmament by our distinguished representative from Pakistan.

Again, when you look at it as a step-by-step process, we don't see how you get towards nuclear disarmament and a world without nuclear weapons until we take the necessary step of halting production of fissile material. You don't have nuclear weapons if

you don't have fissile material. So, again, let me reiterate, that is why my Secretary of State came here to this chamber to underline the urgency of this step, because it is indeed, we believe, an essential step towards a world without nuclear weapons.

The President: Thank you for your important statement. I recognize the distinguished representative of Chile.

Mr. Luciano Parodi (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to reiterate the observations made by the Group of 21 in our last statement on this topic, in which we expressed our concern about the threat to humanity posed by the continued existence of nuclear weapons. We have to recognize that this is a matter of priority for the international community about which there have been numerous political and legal statements with which we are all familiar. The basic idea is to come up with practical actions that cover both nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Any nuclear disarmament is positive and any proliferation is negative. It is therefore important to reconcile the two sides. Our individual and collective responsibilities should not be focused on one aspect alone; we must focus our efforts equally on both. These efforts cannot but involve mutually reinforcing actions established within a step-by-step approach, but also in legally binding instruments that ensure irreversibility.

This seems to us a realistic way of moving towards a nuclear-weapon-free world. It is important to emphasize a range of concrete actions: one, the unequivocal undertaking of nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the complete elimination of nuclear weapons; two, the effective prohibition of the testing, modernization, development and production of new nuclear weapons; three, the elimination of nuclear weapons from military doctrine and strategic deterrence; four, the reduction of nuclear danger, including by de-alerting nuclear weapons and decreasing the operational readiness of nuclear-weapons systems; five, the negotiation of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons; six, the negotiation of a convention on the complete prohibition of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons; seven, the extension of nuclear-weapon-free zones, especially in the Middle East and other zones where there are regional tensions; eight, transparency- and confidence-building measures; nine, strict multilateral monitoring, control and verification mechanisms; and last, the negotiation of a convention that prohibits the development, production, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons, that provides for their destruction and that will lead to the global, non-discriminatory and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons in accordance with a specified timetable.

We should view these interrelated actions as being in the common interest of peace and international security, and especially human security. In this context we welcome the Action Plan of the latest NPT Review Conference and the various resolutions of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly, which reflect the global priority accorded to this issue, establishing responsibilities for both nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States.

We have also reiterated the positive elements of the unilateral and bilateral commitments in the area of disarmament assumed by the nuclear-weapon States, especially the concrete action to reduce nuclear arsenals, the renunciation of the use or first use of force or the threat of the use of force, and also de-alerting. Though insufficient, these actions will always be positive, intermediate steps towards nuclear disarmament in the sense that we appreciate the value of nuclear-weapon-free zones and their expansion into zones that are still critical at the global level, and any measures that can contribute towards generating greater transparency, mutual confidence and adequate verification.

Our ultimate objective is to guarantee zero risk of the use and zero existence of nuclear weapons, but this guarantee can only be achieved through multilaterally binding agreements for a total prohibition of nuclear weapons since, by its mere existence, any

nuclear arsenal, whether of tens or thousands of weapons and vehicles, already constitutes an unacceptable risk for international security. In this context, the concept of holding weapons for deterrent purposes is also unacceptable and we must therefore work for their elimination.

Thank you very much, Mr. President.

The President: Thank you for your important statement, distinguished representative of Chile. And now I call the distinguished representative of Egypt. You have the floor.

Mr. El-Atawy (Egypt): Thank you, Mr. President, and let me again congratulate you on assuming your presidency. It was not the intention of this delegation to take the floor today, since we already have spoken on our position on nuclear disarmament before. However, just to react to a few of the elements that were mentioned today in this session. We are quite encouraged by the reference to the NPT Final Document and the Action Plan, and we are particularly encouraged by their upcoming meeting by the P-5 to think of whatever was contained in the Action Plan and translate that into actual movement towards full nuclear disarmament. And I am particularly encouraged as well at the reference to Action 6 when it comes to our work here in the Conference, and which would be translated into any programme of work that the subsidiary body on nuclear disarmament has to reflect Action 6, which is basically to deal with nuclear disarmament, and we should take that into consideration when we are thinking of a programme of work.

Furthermore, on the fissile material treaty, it is true that we cannot have nuclear weapons if you don't have the material to do nuclear weapons, and it is very encouraging that we would be negotiating a treaty on fissile material that would eliminate all fissile material for nuclear weapons, whether existing or non-existing, I mean future production or already existing nuclear weapons.

And, as a last note, it seems to me that I am always reminding our British colleagues that the Action Plan is not only about the three core issues, but it also has a fourth part, which is on the Middle East, and we again are looking forward to the timely implementation of that part as well.

The President: Thank you for your important intervention. And now I give the floor to the distinguished Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Mexico. You have the floor.

Mr. Hernandez Basave (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): As it is for many others in this chamber so it is for us. On 1 February this year my delegation made a further statement on this important subject. We welcome the statements that have been made today, all of which are extremely important, as partners of Mexico in the new alliance, the delegate from South Africa and the delegate from Egypt have noted, and all these measures encourage us to believe that making headway in nuclear disarmament is possible.

We would like to reiterate that we have both unilateral and bilateral measures. As the distinguished Ambassador of the United States has reminded us, the Conference on Disarmament is not the only negotiating forum in Geneva; there are other forums, including at least one other disarmament negotiating forum in Geneva, in this case a bilateral one but a negotiating forum nonetheless. We urge these to continue their work.

We also encourage the continuation of regional measures such as nuclear-weapon-free zones. Mexico is a strong supporter of these nuclear-weapon-free zones; in fact we were the key promoter of the first nuclear-free zone to be established in a densely populated area, a zone which remains in place today. None of these measures obviate the need for a multilateral instrument which, as the distinguished Ambassador of South Africa clearly indicated, has the core elements of irreversibility, transparency and verifiability.

This is why, simply for the record, because we are involved in this discussion right now and because we want to reiterate and raise awareness of the need for concrete action, we are wondering whether we all agree on the need for this multilateral instrument which would help us, perhaps progressively, to eliminate nuclear weapons.

How will we actually achieve this, Mr. President? How can we overcome the procedural obstacles which we have encountered over the past 14 years in this Conference on Disarmament, which is the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum? How and when, within what framework and which forum will we be able to turn into reality the political determination of all those who have spoken here today, including amongst them recognized nuclear-weapon States which are parties to the NPT and other nuclear-weapon States which have decided not to join the Treaty?

Of course, we, the overwhelming majority of the international community who do not have nuclear weapons, we have fulfilled our commitment, we stand by our objective and we are fighting tirelessly, through all kinds of subsidiary and secondary measures, to convince those that have weapons to get rid of them. How and when will we achieve this? This is the question that we need to consider, and this is why we have reiterated and will continue to reiterate our invitation to seek alternatives to a forum which is preventing us from making progress in this direction.

Thank you very much.

The President: Thank you for your statement. I recognize the distinguished representative of Algeria.

Mr. Khelif (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Algerian delegation did not want to take the floor, as Ambassador Jazaïry has already done so and has spoken about the position of my country, Algeria, on nuclear disarmament. However, the intense discussions that we have heard, in particular the statements by some delegations and by nuclear-weapon States, prompted up to take the floor again on this subject. At the outset, I would like to say that Algeria is a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as a non-nuclear-weapon State. It is fully committed to meeting its obligations under the Treaty and is subject to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Comprehensive Safeguards System.

We are encouraged by the statements made by the delegations of some nuclear-weapon States that reaffirm their commitment to nuclear disarmament. We hope that all of these pledges will be given effect in the framework of our Conference and, in particular, as the representative of fraternal Egypt mentioned in his statement, that steps will be taken to establish a subsidiary body in the Conference on Disarmament to deal with this issue. Another issue of great importance is that of military doctrines that attach great importance to nuclear weapons in the defence policies of nuclear-weapon States. We do not know whether such policies and military doctrines would pave the way for nuclear disarmament. Over the past year we have noted that a number of nuclear-weapon States have emphasized the importance of these weapons for the protection of their vital interests, as well as their right to self-defence under article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. This particular article also applies to us, as non-nuclear-weapon States and also as States with vital interests. We would like to know when we can put a clear time limit on nuclear disarmament, because we know that the vital interests of States will not go away. Does this mean that these weapons will also remain? Or will they be eliminated only if we find other formulas that grant security and peace to these States more forcefully than nuclear weapons?

With regard to the non-proliferation regime, the Algerian delegation, in its earlier statements, raised a number of questions concerning all aspects of non-proliferation. We know that there is a politico-military alliance that pursues nuclear policies and doctrines

which, unfortunately, allows non-nuclear-weapon States that are, in theory, parties to NPT, to benefit from these weapons. These are all issues that we can address in the Conference on Disarmament under item 2 of the agenda, on the prevention of nuclear war. We look forward to the commitment expressed at the most recent NPT Review Conference being put into effect through the practical steps that we in the Conference on Disarmament will take, as part of the programme of work that we all hope to produce.

The President: Thank you for your observations. And I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of South Africa.

Mr. Combrink (South Africa): My apologies for taking the floor again. However, a few comments were made that I just wanted to respond to.

We fully share the view expressed by our colleagues from Mexico and from Egypt, particularly in relation to the role of the Conference on Disarmament in nuclear disarmament matters. I also want to agree with the comment made by Her Excellency the Ambassador of the United States, in relation to the importance of addressing the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, and agree with her that the achievement of a world without nuclear weapons cannot be achieved if that step is not taken. However, that is not the full story. There are also other issues that need to be addressed, and those issues relate to the production of actual nuclear weapons, the use of nuclear weapons, the stockpiling and, of course, the very important and vital issue of the elimination of nuclear weapons. These are all matters that need to be addressed, and that is why my delegation has never just supported the negotiation in the Conference on Disarmament on one particular issue. There are a number of issues that we need to address in the Conference, and it is our hope that this Conference will be able to fulfil its responsibility and start substantive work on all these important issues.

The President: Thank you for your intervention. I recognize the distinguished Ambassador of France. You have the floor.

Mr. Danon (France) (*spoke in French*): I hadn't intended to take the floor again either, but I wanted to react to two or three points that have been raised and to say how pleased I am to see Pakistan basing itself on the NPT to make its points concerning nuclear disarmament.

The commitments made by all States parties to the NPT are considerable and, although they can be reaffirmed, have been assumed once and for all time. I remember the Ambassador of New Zealand asking me during the NPT Review Conference whether France could reaffirm its commitment to the NPT and I replied "yes, of course, since the NPT is a near universal treaty to which France is a full party". But this is not the real issue. The real issue is that, in order to fulfil our obligations, we need a road map, because we cannot do everything at the same time, all at once, so to speak. Undoubtedly the real achievement of the 2010 Review Conference is that we now have an Action Plan which covers a whole array of areas, including the three pillars, as well as the Middle East, which of course I am not forgetting.

We have this road map. Let's try to adhere to it as far as possible. I understand, of course, that certain countries have strong positions, which I fully understand, for example, in favour of a comprehensive [test] ban treaty. However, we discussed this possibility at the NPT Review Conference and by consensus decision it was left out of the Action Plan. I appreciate that these countries are reiterating their positions, but it is already difficult enough to implement what we all agreed by consensus during the Review Conference. It is impossible, I believe, to move in a direction which was not even agreed by the consensus at that time.

We have our road map. There are things in it that relate to disarmament and this, the entire first pillar, is dependent overall on what is done in the Conference on Disarmament. Other areas are dependent on what is done in Vienna. As for this process on which we have embarked and our fragile hopes for the Middle East, perhaps progress will be made in Geneva, perhaps elsewhere, we shall see, but it won't be in the Conference on Disarmament.

So, the disarmament pillar is the responsibility of the Conference on Disarmament. And there we have a problem because within the Conference on Disarmament the non-universality of the NPT means that we are blocked on the question of the fissile material treaty. Pakistan does not wish to start negotiations and has an incontrovertible right to take this stance. What can we do in this situation? In the NPT Review Conference and the United Nations General Assembly the vast majority would like to begin these negotiations — just one, or maybe two or three are against — yet within the Conference on Disarmament we are unable to do so.

It is on this very specific question that we should focus our attention. All the options are on the table. Some are unacceptable to certain countries, others are acceptable. I can tell you that there is enormous pressure from many countries, including from the group of countries recognized as nuclear-weapon States in the NPT (the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council), to start negotiations without those who do not wish to do so. But this is a complicated course of action because it breaks to an extent with the dynamic and approach of the Conference on Disarmament. At the same time, however, maintaining the existing dynamic and approach of the Conference on Disarmament means blocking negotiations on the fissile material treaty, since one country is absolutely opposed to starting these negotiations. I believe that this is what we should focus on. I have a few personal views on the issue and believe above all that the question of how we overcome the obstacle posed by this party should be the subject of a major discussion.

Then there are all the other aspects of the Action Plan relating to the disarmament pillar, which obviously I haven't forgotten about. This is what we, the five permanent members of the Security Council, are going to be discussing at our meeting in Paris at the end of June. What is our aim? The idea is to be ready by 2015, since we have a total of five years between one NPT Review Conference and the next in which to fulfil as many of these obligations as possible assuming we can't manage to fulfil them all. So we are going to work on this question. I am not saying this now as a pretext. Once again I'm drawing your attention to the fact that the success of the NPT Action Plan will be a collective success and not a success achieved by just a few. That said, I am not in any way detracting from the specific responsibilities borne by the nuclear-weapon States. Quite the opposite. The nuclear-weapon States have a very specific responsibility vis-à-vis the NPT, and what I am saying is simply that today it is down to the entire international community as a whole to fulfil its obligations, with each State pushing the others, so to speak, to work even harder for peace and security.

The President: Thank you for your important statement. I now recognize the distinguished Ambassador of Nigeria. You have the floor.

Mr. Laro (Nigeria): Mr. President, the Nigerian delegation is pleased to have you chair our work in the Conference. Nigeria enjoys good bilateral relations with China, and please rest assured that we shall continue to work and cooperate with you during your presidency.

The Nigerian delegation is pleased to have your working papers 565 and 566, which represent a positive effort at providing the Conference with an opportunity of engaging in substantive work. Nigeria stands ready to study these papers, and will agree to the most appropriate of the papers as would be supported by all delegations.

The desire of the Nigerian delegation to have a world free of nuclear weapons has been well documented. However, when the United Nations body charged with the responsibility of negotiating nuclear disarmament gets bogged down with procedural matters rather than engaging in substantive work, it leaves my delegation in doubt as to where we are going and what we wish to achieve.

Nigeria continues to maintain that as long as nuclear weapons exist, there will be no peace for both the haves and the have-nots. In this regard, the Nigerian delegation would like to urge delegations to consider the urgent need to engage in substantive work with a view to attaining a world free of nuclear weapons.

Nigeria's taking the floor at this point is not intended to question the relevance of the Conference, because we believe the Conference remains relevant. Rather it is to reiterate our conviction on the need for a clear exhibition of the necessary political will to move us out of our current deadlock. Nigeria stands ready to contribute to all efforts to move the work of the Conference forward.

The President: Thank you very much for the kind words addressed to the Chair, and also I've taken note of your important statement.

And, at this stage, any other delegations wish to take the floor on the subject of nuclear disarmament? I see none.

I recognize the overwhelming support as expressed today for document CD/WP.565 concerning the meeting arrangement in the format of informal meetings of the Conference on Disarmament. In this particular context, I draw much encouragement from the support, especially by the distinguished Ambassador of the United States, for the paper 565, though personally I would have hoped that such explicit support could have been expressed on 22 March. Secondly, I recognize that nobody today has sought to dispute Conference document 565. I draw particular encouragement from the statement made by the distinguished Ambassador of Japan concerning their new position without repeating anything to the effect that they do not see any particular reason why we should go back to the precedent we have already done last year without questioning the additional value of the informals.

So, based on the above two points of understanding, I, as President, envisage to schedule open-ended informal consultations at 10 o'clock tomorrow in this chamber. This is an open-ended consultation, open to all members. The purpose of doing so is to heed the advice of member States and, in my capacity as the President, to facilitate any evolving consensus on the thrust of the Conference document as contained in CD/WP.565 so as to enable the participation of all Conference members inside the Conference process on all core issues, particularly on the FMCT.

So, as President, I remain as open, as facilitative and as accommodative as possible. So this is the arrangement. With this I conclude the business of today. The next meeting of the plenary will be currently scheduled on 29 March at 10 o'clock, though subject to whatever new understanding or new arrangement is decided by members.

This meeting stands adjourned.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.