

Conference on Disarmament

31 July 2012

English

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

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President: Mr. Jean-Hugues Simon-Michel (France)

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The President (*spoke in French*): I propose that we begin our discussions. I call to order the 1265th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Before beginning our work on substantive issues, I wish to take this opportunity to bid farewell to our colleagues who left Geneva during the intersessional period: Ambassador Reyes Rodríguez of Cuba, Ambassador Leshno-Yaar of Israel and Ambassador Kunanayakam of Sri Lanka. On behalf of the Conference on Disarmament and on my own behalf, I wish them success and happiness in their future endeavours.

I also wish to welcome those who have recently joined us: Ambassador de Crombrughe de Picquendaele of Belgium, Ambassador Kairamo of Finland, Ambassador Aryasinha of Sri Lanka and Ambassador Edi Yusup of Indonesia. On behalf of the Conference on Disarmament and on my own behalf, I wish to assure them of our full cooperation and support for their work.

As outlined in document CD/WP.571/Rev.1 entitled “Revised draft schedule of activities”, today’s plenary meeting will be devoted to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. But before we begin discussing that matter, I would like to ask whether there is any delegation that first wishes to discuss anything else. It seems there is. I give the floor to the Ambassador of the United States of America, Ms. Laura Kennedy.

Ms. Kennedy (United States of America): Mr. President, excuse me for being so slow off the mark, but it is summer and I’m just getting back in the mood for another exciting session of the Conference on Disarmament under your distinguished presidency.

I took the floor with your permission now because I wish on behalf of my colleagues from China, Russia, the United Kingdom and France to commend to all of the members of the Conference the joint statement that was issued by the five permanent members of the Security Council at the conclusion of the conference in which we all participated in Washington on 27 to 29 June.

We have asked that the statement be issued as a Conference document, so I will not take the interpreters’ time or yours to read it today, but we do urge all States to read this important statement on what the five permanent members have been doing and will do in terms of fulfilling the commitments made at the 2010 NPT Review Conference. I also note that we do have copies in the back in English only if people would like to take a copy now.

The President (*spoke in French*): No one else wishes to take the floor. I therefore suggest we now move on to the item on our agenda which is the prevention of an arms race in outer space. First, I would like to mention a few points from the first meeting on this topic, which was held on 5 June. I mention this by way of introduction on my own account.

On 5 June, 16 speakers from various regional groups took the floor. All of them stressed how important it was to preserve outer space for peaceful uses. The issues of placing weapons in outer space, anti-satellite weapons, inspections, as well as the risks posed by debris in outer space were raised during our discussions. Various solutions for combating the arms race in outer space were mentioned. Many speakers emphasized the importance of confidence-building and transparency measures in this area. Some mentioned the importance of the work of the Group of Governmental Experts which has just met in New York, as well as the concrete proposals that were drawn up in the context of the draft code of conduct for outer space activities that was launched in 2008 and presented in Vienna on the same day, 5 June. A number of countries stressed the need for a legally binding instrument and mentioned previously submitted proposals. Some of them said that the Conference on Disarmament was the forum in which such an instrument should be negotiated under a programme of work.

The following delegations currently appear on the list of speakers for today: Sri Lanka, Cuba, the Russian Federation, the United States of America, Indonesia, the

European Union, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, China, Chile and Australia. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Sri Lanka.

Mr. Aryasinha (Sri Lanka): Mr. President, allow me at the outset to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and express our appreciation of the open, transparent and inclusive manner in which you are guiding the proceedings of this Conference.

I have the honour to make a general statement to the plenary of this august Conference following my assumption of duties as the Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the United Nations in Geneva two weeks ago. I am also honoured that Sri Lanka is currently the Coordinator of the Group of 21.

Sri Lanka attaches great importance to the Conference on Disarmament, which we emphasize is the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community, as mandated by the first special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament. In this context, we express our profound disappointment that the Conference has not been enabled to undertake substantive work on its agenda. In order to continue to persevere and preserve the unique role of this body, it is vital that all of us, the member States, allow the Conference to begin its substantive work on the basis of a balanced and focused programme of work that takes into account the security concerns of all its members in an equitable manner, thereby ensuring its acceptance by consensus.

Sri Lanka maintains its concern that the continued existence of nuclear weapons and their possible use or threat of use pose an overarching threat to humanity, and joins the collective voice for the elimination of nuclear weapons from national arsenals. Pending this achievement, we are of the view that there is an urgent need to reach early agreement on a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. We encourage nuclear-weapon States to reduce nuclear danger through progressive multilateral nuclear disarmament, beginning with the de-alerting of nuclear weapons and reducing the operational readiness of weapons systems. We stand ready to work within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament towards achieving this objective. We believe that it is our joint commitment and responsibility.

It is our common objective to see the world become a safer place. International security architecture, in the form of treaties and initiatives, exists to help us achieve that objective. While the international community has been active in bolstering that architecture, it is evident that this needs to be further strengthened. These global challenges require global solutions. The solutions must take us towards an increase in the pace of multilateral disarmament as well as non-proliferation, which should remain an inclusive process, taking into account the security interests of all States and on the basis of the principle of undiminished security for all. We are of the view that a transparent, sustainable and credible plan for multilateral nuclear disarmament is necessary in order that disarmament and non-proliferation could both advance in a mutually reinforcing manner.

Particularly relevant to today's session, Sri Lanka also supports the promotion of the use of space-based technologies for peaceful use. These technologies have become a part of our daily life. Increasingly, in the use of information, communication, banking and navigation sectors have become dependent on space-based technologies. We are of the view that the exploration and use of outer space and other celestial bodies shall be for peaceful purposes and should be for the common benefit of all countries regardless of their level of economic or scientific development.

To this end, Sri Lanka, together with Egypt, has remained one of the original co-sponsors of the resolution on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. While we work

multilaterally towards this goal, the growing use of outer space calls for redoubling of efforts in areas such as transparency, confidence-building and better information on the part of the space-capable countries to enable us to make advancements in this field. We believe that prevention of an arms race in outer space would avert a grave danger for international peace and security as we witness the rapid spread of space launch capability and increasing offensive applications of space technologies. The importance, therefore, of forging ahead as a matter of priority with negotiations on international legally binding instruments to prevent space weaponization cannot be overemphasized. Sri Lanka commends the joint initiative of China and Russia on the draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and the threat or use of force against outer space objects presented in 2008, and welcomes it as a basis towards adopting an international binding instrument. Sri Lanka has always cautioned that, given the dynamism of space technologies and the fast-spreading launch capabilities, if we do not negotiate barriers against a costly arms race in space now, we will be talking about non-proliferation efforts in space a few years down the road. Our experience in terrestrial non-proliferation efforts should tell us how difficult, or even impossible, it would be to achieve that objective in outer space.

The concept of negative security assurances (NSAs) is vital to the interests of non-nuclear-weapon States. Although it is often construed to be arising from a strategic discourse, it is important to note, however, that the concept is premised on the primacy of the security of people. Pending realization of nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament, which is the ultimate objective of this Conference, it is NSAs which could provide confidence to States that are not in possession of nuclear weapons that their survival and security will not be jeopardized by those which possess them. It is time that the Conference moved toward entrenching this concept as part of its agreed programme of work.

We therefore reiterate that the integrity and credibility of the Conference on Disarmament must be maintained and forward movement made. It is time to avoid the temptation of subjecting the work of this Conference to the vagaries of the changing international strategic landscape, and instead to harness its potential to contribute towards enhancing cooperative security. Sri Lanka hopes to remain proactively engaged within the Conference on Disarmament to help achieve these objectives.

In conclusion, Mr. President, I wish to felicitate the presidencies of Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia and Finland for their steadfast steering of the Conference in 2012, and wish you every success in your tenure as President in the coming weeks.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Ambassador Ravinatha Aryasinha for his kind words addressed to the Chair and for his statement. I now give the floor to the next speaker, Mr. Juan Antonio Quintanilla Román, the representative of Cuba.

Mr. Quintanilla Román (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank you, Mr. President, for your kind words to my Ambassador, Mr. Rodolfo Reyes, and I also take this opportunity to join you in wishing the other Ambassadors who are now leaving us professional and personal success and at the same time I would like to welcome the Ambassadors who are joining the diplomatic family in Geneva, especially those who are here with us today and, in particular, the new Ambassador of Sri Lanka, who we assure of cooperation and joint work with the Cuban delegations in Geneva

With respect to today's agenda item, I must say that we attended the initial debate we held on 31 May with great interest. Before we respond to some of the proposals that were put forward at that time, we would like to make the following comments.

Outer space is the common heritage of mankind and must be explored and used for peaceful purposes only, for the benefit and interest of all mankind in a spirit of cooperation.

Space technology plays an increasingly vital role in our daily lives. Efforts to ensure that outer space is used exclusively for such purposes are extremely important.

Every State has the inalienable right to access outer space for research and peaceful use, in accordance with the Outer Space Treaty of 1967. It should therefore come as no surprise that space security must be our common objective. The ever-greater activity in space could also heighten the risk of an arms race and create uncertainty in space security. The more we depend on space, the more we need to ensure its security. Unfortunately, over the past few years, we have witnessed disturbing initiatives.

We must therefore redouble our efforts to achieve a coherent and coordinated approach between the Conference on Disarmament, the General Assembly and the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) with respect to the peaceful uses of outer space. It should be pointed out that the international guidelines agreed by COPUOS are merely confidence-building or voluntary measures and do not create legally binding obligations.

We believe that the current legal framework on this issue does not go far enough in addressing all the security issues related to outer space. Legally binding agreements are needed to ensure that outer space remains free of any arms development. The draft treaty submitted by Russia and China in 2008 is a good basis for further discussion and perhaps negotiations.

Plunging more into the interactive debate which concerns us, I would like to refer to the draft international code of conduct that the European Union presented in this forum. Such a code would no doubt be useful, especially if we negotiated it in the context of the International Telecommunication Union. It would certainly make outer space more secure.

Nevertheless, we have serious doubts regarding its content on disarmament. In particular, we would like to refer to the principle of self-defence that appears in the draft, and in that regard we would like to ask the following questions. Doesn't this give the impression that outer space could be used to develop an arms race with the aim of contributing to States' self-defence? What would happen then if, moreover, we applied the well-known interpretation of one State, supported by others, concerning pre-emptive self-defence?

The answer is clear. We would send the world a message that would launch an arms race in space with a legal framework that contains loopholes but with a well-established principle stating that "outer space is a common heritage of mankind and shall be used exclusively for peaceful purposes only".

My delegation is totally prepared to work in the Conference on Disarmament on a draft that discusses possible ways in which to ensure that outer space is used for peaceful purposes only. We are in favour of negotiating a legally binding treaty within the Conference that totally prohibits the possibility of developing an arms race in outer space.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the delegation of Cuba for its statement.

(*spoke in French*)

I thank the delegation of Cuba for its statement.

I now give the floor to the next speaker on the list, who is Mr. Victor Vasiliev, the representative of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Vasiliev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Mr. President, first of all, allow me to welcome you, to wish you success and assure you of the support and cooperation of the delegation of Russia.

I would also like to wish success and — what is perhaps no less important — health to those colleagues who have completed their work here in Geneva.

I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome the new Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka and other new permanent representatives to the Conference on Disarmament, and to assure them of our delegation's readiness to cooperate with them.

Our absolute priority at the Conference is the issue of the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We are convinced that it is time to start serious practical work in this area as part of a preventive approach. Otherwise we may miss an opportune moment. As is well known, preventing a threat is always easier than eliminating it.

Our country's position is that the Russian-Chinese draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against outer space objects (PPWT) is a set of measures to prevent the emergence of new, destabilizing high-tech weapons and new areas of confrontation. The deployment of weapons in space could have unpredictable consequences for the international community, as was true at the start of the nuclear age.

All States have an equal and inalienable right to access, explore and benefit from the use of outer space. It is natural that providing for security in outer space is a task we all share, and we must work together to find a solution that will serve to strengthen international security and stability. We have no doubt that the treaty would be an effective and realistic means of achieving this goal. We stand ready to cooperate closely with all States members of the Conference.

At this stage, we propose to focus on the interactive discussion of specific practical aspects of the Russian-Chinese draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in space, which was presented on 12 February 2008.

Delegations have shown great interest in the draft. During the discussion following its presentation, there were many requests for clarifications, to which substantive answers were given. These questions and answers are reflected in document CD/1872.

We are ready for further discussion. At the same time, Russia is ready for step-by-step movement towards ensuring security in outer space, including through the adoption of transparency and confidence-building measures.

As you know, the first session of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities, which I have the honour to chair, has just ended in New York. In this connection, I would like to briefly inform colleagues, in English, about the outcome of the work of the first session.

(spoke in English)

I would like to deliver a note that was adopted on the outcome of the first session of the GGE in New York. The Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space held its first session in New York from 23 to 27 July 2012. In Pursuance of United Nations General Assembly resolution 65/68 of 13 January 2011, the Group began its consideration of outer space transparency and confidence-building measures, making use of the relevant reports of the Secretary-General, including the final report submitted to the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session, and without prejudice to the substantive discussions on the prevention of an arms race in outer space within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament.

Experts nominated by the Governments of Brazil, Chile, China, France, Italy, Kazakhstan, Nigeria, the Republic of Korea, Romania, the Russian Federation, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America participated in the session.

During its first session, the Group took stock of the changes in the political and technical environment with respect to outer space activities since the 1993 report of the Group of Governmental Experts, and which were deemed conducive to transparency and confidence-building measures. The Group considered specific topics related to transparency and confidence-building measures, including, *inter alia*, basic principles related to the use of outer space; political measures related to the rules of conduct; information-sharing measures aimed at enhancing the transparency of activities in outer space; operational measures aimed at enhancing the transparency of activities in outer space; and consultative mechanisms in connection with outer space transparency and confidence-building measures. The Group reviewed the relevant reports of the Secretary-General, including the final report submitted to the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session, on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities, and considered the structure of its report.

The Group decided that it will consider requests from other experts, research institutes and entities to deliver presentations to the Group and decide upon them on a case-by-case basis. I have to mention that the first presentation was made by the representative of the European Union, who presented the draft international code of conduct to the Group. To help ensure that the work of the Group is as inclusive as possible, experts from other States and intergovernmental bodies, such as the International Telecommunication Union and the World Meteorological Organization, as well as from civil society, are encouraged to provide written recommendations to the Group. In this regard I would like to mention that the first input was received from Australia, who transmitted to the Chair its views on international law applicable to outer space. The Chair would encourage other countries wishing to do so to make submissions to the Group. At the final meeting of its first session, the Group adopted an indicative programme of work, which included a detailed schedule of activities that will guide the development of its study as well as its outreach activities during the intersessional period. So my presentation here may be also considered as one of those outreach activities.

In addition, to help ensure that the work of the Group is complementary to other efforts in the field of outer space, the Group encouraged its Chair and its members to liaise and engage as appropriate with other bodies and initiatives, such as the United Nations General Assembly First Committee, the Conference on Disarmament, the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and meetings organized by civil society and research institutes.

The second session of the Group will be held here in Geneva from 1 to 5 April 2013, and it will be a good opportunity for the Conference members to interact with this Group. I was also informed that the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research will be hosting or organizing its annual Space Security Conference on the margins of the second session of the Group here in Geneva.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Victor Vasiliev for his statement and kind words. The next speaker on the list is the Ambassador of the United States. Ms. Kennedy, you have the floor.

Ms. Kennedy (United States of America): I recall making a statement on space and the prevention of an arms race in outer space when we met on 5 June on this topic, but today I would like to build on them and first of all warmly congratulate Victor Vasiliev of the Russian Federation on his election as Chair at the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts in their study on outer space transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs) and very much welcome the progress made under his distinguished chairmanship and the Group at its first session last week in New York and I think the indicative programme of work adopted by that Group does indeed provide a solid framework for the experts to conduct a comprehensive review of the role of bilateral and

multilateral mechanisms to strengthen stability in space, which as speakers have noted is vital to all of us here in this room and indeed to all nations around the globe. As we have noted before, this study provides a unique opportunity to explore the possibilities for international cooperation and pragmatic, voluntary, effective and timely TCBMs by maintaining a focus on voluntary and legally non-binding measures. A consensus report can contribute to substantive discussion on space security here at the Conference on Disarmament as well as the United Nations General Assembly First Committee next October.

With regard to the multilateral TCBMs, we welcome the Group's plans to give full consideration to efforts to pursue an international code of conduct for outer space activities. As again noted previously, the United States is indeed working closely with both the European Union as well as a whole range of like-minded nations to develop such a code. We welcome the European Union's initiation of a multilateral diplomatic process to discuss and negotiate such a code, and note that there will be a multilateral experts meeting that the European Union is organizing in October in New York on the margins of the First Committee. We look forward to participating in that meeting and also strongly support the efforts to pursue outreach on the code to all United Nations Member States, again, given the fact that we have a stake in this goal of enhancing stability and confidence in outer space activities.

Finally, I would also like to welcome our new colleagues from Belgium, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Finland and also bid farewell to our departing colleagues.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Ambassador of the United States and I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Indonesia, Mr. Edi Yusup.

Mr. Yusup (Indonesia): Mr. President, as this is Indonesia's first intervention under your presidency of the Conference, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency and assure you of Indonesia's support in this endeavour.

Today is the first Conference on Disarmament meeting I have attended since I arrived a month ago. Therefore, I would like to extend my greetings to the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev. I look forward to successfully working with you all.

Today's thematic debate in the Conference on Disarmament on the issue of prevention of an arms race in outer space brings me back to my early days watching Star Trek or Star Wars movies. A lesson drawn from these movies is that an empire relying solely on technology and domination over the population is destructive for humankind.

With the rapid advance of technology, we have witnessed many achievements in the last 50 years in human space flight and space exploration for peaceful purposes. Yet we must avoid the possibility of an arms race in outer space.

In this light, Indonesia reaffirms that the Conference on Disarmament, as the sole forum for multilateral negotiations, must discuss the issue of an arms race in outer space and focus on finding ways to avert an arms race in outer space.

The prevention of an arms race in outer space has assumed greater urgency in the light of the legitimate concern that the existing legal instruments are inadequate to deter the militarization and weaponization of outer space.

As mentioned by previous delegates, we have several proposals on the table. To name a few, my delegation would like to recall that Indonesia, together with China, Russia, Belarus, Viet Nam, Zimbabwe and Syria, presented working paper CD/1679 in June 2002,

which outlined the possible elements for a future international legal agreement on the prevention of the deployment of weapons in outer space and the threat or use of force against objects in outer space.

Then we have a joint Russian-Chinese initiative as contained in document CD/1839, the draft treaty on prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against outer space objects. We believe that this proposal deserves further consideration when the Conference adopts a programme of work. As reported by the distinguished delegate of Russia, we have also noted the first session of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities. However, such proposals or mechanisms should not replace the need for a legally binding instrument that enhances security in space and for all space users.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to underline that all States have a responsibility to refrain from engaging in any activity which could jeopardize the collective goal of maintaining a weapons-free outer space. We believe that the exploration and use of outer space and other celestial bodies should have solely peaceful objectives and be of benefit to all States.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Ambassador of Indonesia for his statement and now give the floor to Mr. Jiří Blažek, speaking on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. Blažek (Cyprus): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

During the first thematic debate on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, which took place on 5 June, Ambassador Iliopoulos, the Deputy Representative of the European Union, made a statement on behalf of the European Union and its member States, in which among other things he introduced the revised draft of the international code of conduct for outer space activities. This draft was officially presented at a multilateral meeting taking place in Vienna on the same day. Copies of the revised draft were then distributed in this room.

During the interactive debate at the Conference meeting of 5 June a few comments and questions were made about the code, and it is my honour today to address them and to inform you about the intentions of the European Union as to how to continue in the process of negotiation of the code.

As you know, the European Union officially launched on 5 June in Vienna a multilateral diplomatic process to discuss and negotiate its initiative for an international code of conduct for outer space activities. As many as 110 participants from more than 40 countries gathered for this multilateral meeting, at which the European Union introduced a revised version of its draft code, based on comments received in bilateral meetings with various partners.

The logic of holding this meeting in Vienna on 5 June was to profit from the presence of members of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) in Vienna, as the fifty-fifth session of COPUOS started the following day. But a number of countries were represented by their mission to the United Nations in Vienna or Geneva, or by a capital.

At the meeting, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research officially launched its project entitled “Facilitating the process for the development of an international code of conduct for outer space activities”, which, in parallel with the diplomatic process, aims to facilitate information dissemination and exchange of views on the concept of this code of conduct.

Due to the overarching nature of this initiative, we consider it would not be appropriate to table it in any existing forum competent on disarmament (like the Conference on Disarmament or the United Nations General Assembly First Committee) or civilian outer space activities (like COPUOS or the United Nations General Assembly Fourth Committee), with the clear understanding that these bodies should be kept duly informed of our progress, and that our work should be done without prejudice to future work in these international forums. Moreover, these bodies only gather a limited number of countries, and we would like all countries wishing to participate to this process to be able to do so.

We have thus decided on an ad hoc process, open to the participation of all States. As such, this initiative is neither dealing with the placement of weapons in outer space, which is being tackled in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, nor with practical transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs) which are developed in the COPUOS long-term sustainability working group and are tackled by the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on TCBMs in Outer Space, which started its work in New York last week. In our view, the proposed international code of conduct for outer space activities is a political framework, which is absolutely compatible and complementary with other existing initiatives.

Regarding now the envisaged way ahead, the new draft was introduced to the international community for the first time on 5 June.

The next step will be the first multilateral experts meeting, which will take place most likely in New York in mid-October 2012, in order to benefit from the presence of colleagues following the United Nations General Assembly First and Fourth Committees. This meeting is designed to discuss and negotiate in a multilateral format the text of the code, and would serve to prepare the next diplomatic steps. Again this meeting will be open to participation by all United Nations Member States.

Perhaps more than one multilateral expert meeting will be necessary to agree on a draft text, but we do not foresee more than three expert meetings before a possible ad hoc diplomatic conference, at which the code would be open to signature. This conference could take place in 2013, if negotiations go smoothly, as we would hope, thanks also to your collective support.

We consider the project of an international code of conduct on outer space activities as a common project of the countries wishing to work on it. The current text is still a draft and might be dramatically changed in the future, but reflects our efforts to strike a balance between a number of stakeholders in the space field, which hopefully will prove ultimately to be agreeable to the majority of the spacefaring States, after our multilateral consultations. This proposal constitutes in our view a sound basis in order to enhance security, safety and sustainability of all outer space activities.

Now, let me address the concrete remarks made during our meeting of 5 June. Regarding the remarks that the negotiations should take place under the umbrella of the United Nations, the European Union has always supported multilateralism. As already stated, we consider our initiative for a code of conduct as an overarching initiative, which is not limited to the civilian or the disarmament fields, and thus we do not intend to table the draft code in any of the existing forums for non-proliferation and disarmament, such as the First Committee or the Conference on Disarmament, or civilian outer space, such as the Fourth Committee or COPUOS. We want all countries to be able to participate to this process, and not only the countries represented in the Conference on Disarmament or COPUOS. Moreover, we want to act swiftly for practical reasons on a project which is legally non-binding and based on the acceptance of voluntary rules. This initiative is not in opposition with the United Nations but more in complementarity with it, and a formal link

could be established between the future code and the United Nations (the code could be, for example, formally deposited with the United Nations).

Regarding the Algerian questions raised on 5 June on principle 2, preservation of the security and integrity of space objects in orbit, this principle or general philosophy should cover all types of situations. The idea is to refrain from any action which tends to bring about damage to outer space objects in orbit, whatever the object, be it civil or military. The only exception to this principle is self-defence, in line with the Charter of the United Nations, or imperative safety considerations. That's what you find as principle 3, due consideration for the legitimate defence interests of States, and in section 4.2 of the draft.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of the European Union for his intervention and now give the floor to Mr. So Se Pyong, Ambassador of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Mr. So Se Pyong (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Mr. President, since this is the first time the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has taken the floor under your presidency, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of a high post as the president of the Conference on Disarmament.

The twenty-first century is an era of space science, and the peaceful use of outer space is the unanimous desire of the international community. Now, there persist some negative moves that can easily ignite a new arms race in outer space against the global trends towards the peaceful use of outer space. It constitutes a serious challenge, threatening the peace and security of the world. It is true that outer space, a common heritage of mankind, is misused by certain powerful States for their strategic purposes, and a huge amount of financial resources are invested to this end. A typical example is the missile defence system stepped up by a certain State on a full scale. That missile defence system is undoubtedly aimed at gaining supremacy by means of outer space, thus inciting another arms race in outer space. Saying something about protection from missile strikes is mere sophistry, justifying the intention to build a missile defence system and cover up its dangerous nature. The Power that rounded up the establishment of a missile shield in Europe is set on building missile defence systems in North-East Asia and the Middle East.

This proves that the operation of building a missile defence system is going global. As regards the missile defence system that is aimed to lay siege to the Powers in the Asia-Pacific region from the east and the west, it is no doubt an offensive system to contain regional Powers and hold military hegemony over them. This situation necessitates the establishment of a more effective new, multilateral legal mechanism for deterring militarization of outer space or preventing its weaponization as a matter of urgency.

The Conference on Disarmament, as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, has the primary role in the negotiation of a multilateral agreement or agreements, as appropriate, on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. My delegation views that it is time to establish an ad hoc committee on this issue and to start negotiations. As far as the international legal instrument is concerned, we appreciate the joint draft treaty by the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China on the prevention of placement of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against outer space objects. We believe that the draft serves as a good basis for negotiations, since it is an initiative which could positively contribute to prevent an arms race in outer space and promote world peace and security in view of its aim and purport.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea remains unchanged in its position to oppose militarization of outer space or its weaponization. We hold that the exploration and use of outer space, including the Moon and other celestial bodies, should be carried out corresponding to the global trends towards the peaceful use of outer space. Outer space could not be the field of contest for military supremacy of certain powerful States. Space

science and technology should not be developed and used as an instrument to violate security and interfere in the internal affairs of other countries. The principle of equal sovereignty and non-interference in others' internal affairs are more strongly asserted by the international community than ever before. It is against this background that activities for space development by certain countries are overlooked though they are of a military nature, whereas some countries are accused of developing space though it is for peaceful purposes. This is the height of partiality and double standards. Outer space is not the monopoly of someone but belongs to humankind. All States have a legitimate right to develop and use outer space pursuant to their own development programme. No one has a right to intervene in others' space development activities for peaceful purposes. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as a spacefaring nation, will continue to actively participate in the peaceful exploration and use of outer space and support international initiatives and efforts to deter militarization of outer space and prevent its weaponization.

Mr. Shen Jian (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Mr. President, as this is the first time the Chinese delegation has taken the floor during your presidency, allow me to congratulate you on assuming the presidency of the Conference. We would also like to take this opportunity to welcome our new colleagues who have recently taken up their posts.

During the previous thematic discussion on outer space, the Chinese delegation explained in detail our country's position and views on the subject. In the light of the current state of affairs, we would like to take this opportunity to expound on a few points.

The first point relates to the draft treaty on prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against outer space objects. Currently, challenges to security in outer space and threats to the development of outer space are both on the rise. On the one hand, there is a trend towards further weaponization of outer space, which is increasingly affecting security in outer space and the international strategic situation. On the other hand, the space environment is deteriorating, and there is a trend towards more congestion in outer space and more space debris, which is threatening the development of outer space.

China is of the view that the most important, direct and fundamental threat to space security is still the weaponization of outer space and an arms race in outer space.

Security in outer space and the development of outer space are involved in a dialectical relationship, and efforts in both areas should be carried forward in a balanced and comprehensive manner. If we selectively ignore the issue of the weaponization of outer space and overly emphasize or even exaggerate the threats posed by the development of outer space, this could lead the international community to veer off course or even lose its way entirely in its efforts to preserve security in outer space.

China has taken note of questions raised in previous discussions on the draft treaty proposed jointly by China and the Russian Federation in 2008. As a matter of fact, as the delegation of the Russian Federation has just pointed out, in 2009, in response to comments and questions on the subject, China and the Russian Federation submitted to the Conference working paper CD/1872, which further elaborated on the draft treaty and provided clarification and explanations relating to concerns expressed about aspects such as definitions, scope and verification.

It is important to note that the draft treaty has always been open for improvement. We are willing to improve and enhance the draft by assimilating the views of other parties as expressed during negotiations, formal discussions or informal discussions. We hope that, in addition to expressing their concerns and raising questions, the parties will also be able to put forward constructive amendment proposals. We are willing to make joint efforts to explore effective ways of resolving a number of issues, such as that of verification in outer space, and to work together to enrich and perfect the draft.

The second point relates to transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs) in outer space activities. China attaches great importance to this issue. We believe that appropriate and feasible TCBMs can enhance trust, reduce accidents and errors and regularize space activities, and that they can be a useful addition to efforts to prevent the weaponization of outer space and an arms race in outer space.

Preliminary discussions on related issues took place during the recently convened first session of the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities. We thank the delegation of the Russian Federation for its summary of those discussions. China is ready to work together with the parties in the framework of the Group of Governmental Experts to comprehensively and painstakingly explore issues and proposals related to TCBMs in outer space activities, and we look forward to achieving positive results through the Group.

At the same time, we believe that the two issues of the prevention of an arms race in outer space and TCBMs in outer space activities are not mutually exclusive, but rather complementary. While discussing TCBMs in outer space activities, the parties should also explore ways to promote negotiations on preventing an arms race in outer space. We should not favour one while neglecting the other or treat proposed TCBMs in outer space activities as a substitute for the process of preventing an arms race in outer space.

The third point concerns an international code of conduct for outer space activities. The first multilateral meeting on an international code governing arms in outer space was held in Vienna in June of this year, thereby formally launching the multilateral process to negotiate such a code. We welcome these developments. We wish to thank the European Union for its summary of the discussions held at that meeting and its views on the next steps to be taken in this regard. We would also like to take this opportunity to share our views on the multilateral process to negotiate a code of conduct.

The multilateral discussions on the issue should not be restricted by a predetermined time frame or expected final result. Rather, they should entail considering as many useful proposals as possible, taking into account the parties' legitimate concerns, and ensuring that the results achieved enjoy the broadest possible support.

Broad participation of the international community, and particularly of countries with space capabilities, should be ensured. The United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities is an appropriate forum for discussions on a code of conduct. The rules of procedure should be further clarified, so as to ensure that the discussions take place in a smooth and orderly fashion. In addition, we believe that the code of conduct should focus on dealing with peaceful uses of outer space and avoid regulating military and security affairs.

China notes that, although the process to negotiate a code of conduct has been officially launched, owing to different internal political factors and conditions in each country there is still a long road ahead before the international community concludes a broadly accepted and effective international code of conduct on outer space activities. China looks forward to a continued exchange of views on issues related to a code of conduct.

The President (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Mr. Shen Jian for his kind words addressed to the Chair and for his statement, and I now give the floor to Mr. Pedro Oyarce, Ambassador of Chile.

Mr. Oyarce (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, we would like to begin by congratulating you on your work as President. We would also like to welcome the Ambassadors of Belgium, Indonesia and Sri Lanka, and to thank the Ambassador of Indonesia and Ambassador Aryasinha for their input today. Ambassador Aryasinha will

chair the Group of 21. We firmly believe that they will keep contributing to the work of this Conference, which is in a complex phase. We also wish to extend our thanks to those leaving Geneva, and particularly the Ambassador of Cuba, as we shared the presidential terms with him in 2011 and the P6 worked very closely together. We also wish to take this opportunity to bid farewell to and thank our friend, Tarja Pesämaa, who is leaving the Finnish Mission tonight to take up new duties in Helsinki.

We will make some general comments about some points that were raised during the last debate on 31 May, because there is nothing new here, and then we will discuss regulatory processes. Outer space activities are expanding and becoming increasingly important, but above all, they pose challenges, some of which are emerging and some not new. We are all concerned about preserving the sustainability of peaceful uses of outer space, which we see as a resource for all mankind. Therefore, we emphasize the need to reaffirm and renew our collective commitment, so that the human presence in space and the activity that occurs there favours development and human security.

The impact of space activities is not limited to what are known as “space actors”, but affects all members of the international community. An approach based on multilateralism and cooperation — two key concepts — is therefore crucial to addressing the peaceful uses of outer space. This sort of approach must be used in all the relevant forums.

It would therefore be wise to continue improving the multilateral framework for this cooperation, which has a scientific and technical dimension as well as a normative dimension, in order to guarantee that the benefits of space activity are reaped in a fair and equitable manner.

The recent meeting of the intergovernmental group of experts on the fundamental issue of confidence-building measures is an opportunity to encourage interactive dialogue and cooperation. We welcome the report given by the Chair of the Group today, and I believe that it shows the possibilities and potentialities of this process. All of this requires continuing the work aimed at preventing an arms race, including the deployment of weapons, in outer space. This goal is not only key to preserving and developing the peaceful uses of space, but also to maintaining global security, which we see as a universal public good. There is also a need to develop measures to strengthen strategic stability.

Successive resolutions of the General Assembly have continued embracing the idea of improving the regulatory framework in space, and in this Conference, we have considered initiatives to negotiate a treaty to prevent the deployment of weapons in outer space, as well as proposals to establish a legally binding provision on the testing and use of anti-satellite weapons. These developments are indicative of the international community’s concern over activities that could be very destabilizing. The initiatives of China and Russia are significant contributions, as noted in document 1839.

The treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against outer space objects, like any international security instrument, raises questions on the area that should be regulated, the definitions that should clearly outline the conduct and activities to be regulated, and the control mechanisms underpinning the effectiveness of the treaty, especially to build up trust between States.

We believe that establishing a subsidiary body in this Conference is still warranted. We also believe that opening negotiations does not undermine their outcome, but rather, allows an exchange of views that is enriching for all.

We should take advantage of the considerable potential of other specialized bodies to develop an instrument. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and the International Telecommunication Union have made substantive progress that should be taken into account.

Chile is willing to explore other options related to the concept of soft law, where instruments take the form of codes of practice or codes of conduct, which space actors join on a voluntary basis, but which they can incorporate in their own domestic legislation. Soft law is not legally binding, but has some effect on the behaviour of States. Its flexibility enables it to better adapt to rapid technological progress, while its nature leads to better integration in the normative practices of globalization and the revolution in communications.

For many years, our country has subscribed to a school of thought that advocates space law and the progressive development of space law through legally binding instruments. Given that the last space treaty dates back to 1979, it seems appropriate to consider the soft law proposals which, in accordance with the basic principles of the Outer Space Treaty, seek to increase legal security and, above all, improve operational conditions in outer space. This would safeguard the sustainability of space activities. For this reason, we are willing to consider the ideas put forward by the European Union.

In this context, we have carefully followed the work being done to draft an international code of conduct for outer space activities, with a view to adopting the code in 2013, as suggested. The meeting of experts in New York next October will offer an opportunity to facilitate the dissemination of information and exchange of views on this draft.

The European Union draft contains elements that must be analysed in the context of strengthening regulatory mechanisms. Obviously, the principles that guide this initiative, especially those that have been mentioned — freedom of access to space for all those with peaceful purposes, the protection of the security and integrity of space objects in orbit, and consideration of the legitimate interests of States in terms of security and defence — will have to be thoroughly considered. We welcome the position taken and comments made by the representative of the European Union today.

The report of the fifty-fifth session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space refers to that process in paragraphs 46, 47, 48 and 49. Having said that, we will continue working actively in Geneva, Vienna and New York to ensure that outer space is an area that benefits all of mankind and a place for peaceful activities alone. We continue to think that regardless of the substantive work of the Conference on Disarmament, it should include putting an end to the arms race in outer space. We therefore welcome the proposals that were made in document CD/1933.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Ambassador Pedro Oyarce for his kind words addressed to the Chair and for his statement. The next speaker on my list is Mr. Peter Woolcott, the Ambassador of Australia.

Mr. Woolcott (Australia): Mr. President, firstly, can I welcome you to the presidency and promise you our full support and cooperation?

Space is of increasing importance to Australia's economic prosperity, social interaction and national security. Australia therefore shares with other States an enduring interest in a rules-based approach to the use of space which promotes peaceful, safe and responsible activities and protects access to space for future generations. Given the options before us, the question remains how best to take a new step in this direction.

Australia has noted the draft space arms control treaty currently proposed in the Conference, but considers that there are significant technical challenges to the approach taken. Australia shares with other States particular concerns about the scope of the proposed treaty and its lack of an accompanying proposal for an effective verification mechanism.

Australia also sees the development and testing in space of kinetic and directed-energy anti-satellite weapons as the more pressing space security challenge, due to their demonstrated and continuing capacity to cause significant and cascading growth in long-lived orbital space debris. Members of the Conference share a common pragmatic interest in addressing these issues.

In this context, Australia agrees that it would be most fruitful, at this time, to focus on the development of transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs) as a necessary foundation for the future development of new international space norms.

Australia accords particularly high priority to international action to prevent the proliferation of long-lived orbital space debris and sees an urgent need to work towards the development of international norms to prevent the deliberate or accidental creation of such debris.

Australia has therefore declared its support for the concept of an international code of conduct for outer space activities, along the lines proposed by the European Union, building on existing TCBMs to address these concerns. Australia has purposefully engaged in deliberations to develop this code, and encourages other States to engage constructively in this work.

Australia believes that such a code could provide an important means to address the pressing issue of space debris, and that we should work towards this goal with the sense of urgency that the space debris challenge warrants. Australia recognizes that such a code would not be a “silver bullet” to solve all issues relating to space security, but it would be a valuable, practical and achievable step.

Australia is also pleased that the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities established by United Nations General Assembly resolution 65/68 has begun its work. We are particularly pleased that our colleague Victor Vasiliev is chairing the Group. This augurs well for its work.

Although not a member of this Group, Australia expresses its readiness to contribute to its work and, as Mr. Vasiliev has noted, has already proposed to its membership that one focus of the Group’s work could be the application of the broad range of existing international law to the space domain. Australia considers that greater clarity on the interpretation of international law with respect to space security issues beyond that set out in the five United Nations space treaties would be a useful basis on which to develop new TCBMs.

The increasing dependence of all nations on space-enabled services, along with the rapid growth in the number of satellite-operating countries, means that the number of States with direct interest in the security of space has expanded enormously. This is particularly true in our region, the Asia-Pacific. In the interest of enhancing Asia-Pacific countries’ participation in international discourse on space security, Australia and Viet Nam will co-chair a space security workshop under the auspices of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Regional Forum in December this year.

The Conference on Disarmament has a continuing role in enhancing space security. Australia encourages the Conference to reflect on its approach to the development of international norms for space and to focus on establishing norms to protect the world’s continuing ability to undertake peaceful space activities safely. Australia believes that the Conference should take note of the new momentum for the development of effective transparency and confidence-building measures, and consider how best to build on that work.

Before concluding, can I bid farewell to Ambassador Leshno-Yaar and Ambassador Rodríguez? They have both brought great skill and dedication to their work in Geneva and

will be missed for this and their collegial attitude. Can I also welcome the new Ambassadors of Sri Lanka, Belgium, Finland and Indonesia?

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Ambassador Woolcott for his kind words addressed to the Chair and for his statement, and now give the floor to the next speaker, Mr. Mohamed Hatem El-Atawy, the representative of Egypt.

Mr. El-Atawy (Egypt): Mr. President, as this is Ramadan I will keep my statement short. I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to wish all the colleagues observing this holy month a blessed Ramadan.

A few days ago the whole globe came together to witness live the opening of the Olympic Games in London, and I would like to praise the United Kingdom for a job very well done. This live coverage is only one application of space that we not only make use of all the time but we actually take for granted and assume it will always be available for us. However, in the event that outer space becomes a battlefield, not only would that deprive us from watching the Olympic Games, but actually life as we know it will be much changed.

Given the problem and given that past experiences tell us that the best way to avert the use of any weapons system is actually not to deploy it in the first place, this necessitates that we have to take action now on the prevention of arms race in outer space.

I have promised to be short, or at least short by my own standards. So let me make the following remarks. First, the cornerstone of dealing with outer space is to recognize it as the common heritage of humankind. We all benefit from outer space and it is our collective common good. No one country can lay claim to outer space or monopolize it. The threat to the peaceful use of outer space due to its weaponization is a collective threat to humankind. Second, while dealing with outer space and due to the above, multilateralism is the only way to go. While unilateral declarations, bilateral agreements and/or like-minded group assertions may contribute and build confidence, the need for a multilateral legally binding agreement on the prevention of arms race in outer space is a must. In addition, I must stress that, as an issue that needs to be tackled multilaterally and affects everyone, an artificial division among spacefaring and non-spacefaring nations, built on a snapshot of a moment in history, is not helpful. Rather, such a treaty must be universal with equal privileges and obligations for all.

Third, related to the previous point, it is worth noting that the current legal body is lacking. Nor could the gap in the global legal system governing outer space be filled with mere confidence-building measures. This is not to belittle the work of the Group on Governmental Experts that has just concluded its work in New York on transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs) for outer space, and I would like to thank our Russian colleague for giving us a presentation and congratulate him on the Group's reaching a programme of work. Maybe he can teach us something for the future of the Conference on Disarmament. On the contrary, we encourage the work of this Group and we look forward to its successful conclusion to establish TCBMs to complement a legally binding multilateral treaty on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. This new legally binding treaty must prohibit not only the placement of any kind of weapon in outer space or on a celestial body, but it must also prohibit any earth-based or space-based weapons that target satellites.

Fourth, weaponization of outer space is not the same as multilateralization of outer space. While there might be some legitimate military uses of outer space, including communication and navigation, placing weapons in outer space and targeting satellites threaten the mere possibility of the utilization of outer space for peaceful uses, thus indiscriminately affecting the whole world community. On the issue of verification, let me quickly point out the many studies and proposals presented in this field that show that a verification regime can be constructed, of course if there is a political will. Finally, any

treaty on the prevention of an arms race in outer space must be universal, verifiable, equitable and have the same obligations and benefits for all member States.

We continue to hold that this Conference is the place to negotiate such a treaty. We recognize the initiative presented by China and the Russian Federation, submitting a document on the elements of a treaty, which although not perfect can serve as a good basis to commence negotiations. Alternatively, any other text could be presented and negotiated. However, the important element is to start negotiations on this timely issue.

Every year Egypt and Sri Lanka alternately present a resolution on this topic to the First Committee of the United Nations. Every year such a resolution receives near-unanimity with only two countries abstaining, which makes this issue the most widely supported among the four core issues of the Conference on Disarmament. If one is seeking a test of ripeness of the topics for negotiation in the Conference, this indeed is a good indicator. This year Egypt is presenting the resolution to the First Committee, and we call on all countries to continue their support and call on the two countries that abstained to join the world community in voting for this resolution and commencing negotiations in the Conference on a legally binding verifiable treaty on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. El-Atawy for his statement and his kind words addressed to the Chair, and now give the floor to Ms. Jo Adamson, Ambassador of the United Kingdom.

Ms. Adamson (United Kingdom): I wish to join others in welcoming new colleagues here from Belgium, Finland, Indonesia and Sri Lanka and to bid farewell to those departing. I would like to associate myself with the remarks made by the European Union about the European Union code of conduct. Secondly, I would like to congratulate Cosmonaut Vasiliev for the successful launch of the Group of Governmental Experts, which blasted off in New York on 23 July and is now travelling in multilateral orbit, and I think the benefit of that is that the craft has risen above national concerns and is taking the strategic view, not quite from outer space but certainly altogether with different views.

I wanted also to pick up on a comment from our colleague from Cuba about the European Union code of conduct, which I think we all hope in due course will be called the international code of conduct once we have gone through the processes the European Union mentioned. Our colleague from Cuba was rightly concerned that this should not be seen as in any way endorsing any kind of weaponization of space. I think on the contrary that the aim of the code is to increase reassurance that by having agreed rules of the road we should indeed be reassuring each other about our intentions.

Finally, I wanted to pick up on a comment by our new colleague from Indonesia who mentioned *Star Trek* and *Star Wars* as something to show why we should be concerned about technological developments. I wish to submit in this area our own very good and very long-standing programme called *Dr. Who*, which is about a time traveller who travels in outer space. He is a rather strange fellow. He has a strange sense of humour. Those of you who watched the Olympics opening ceremony I think will see elements of him there, but he is the embodiment of the peaceful uses of outer space. He brings to us the marvels and imagination that we can find in outer space, so I hope when we carry on our work in this area we look less at the worries and more at the potential of space.

Mr. Lusiński (Poland): I would like to join other colleagues who supported the idea of a code of conduct for outer space. Like in any other complicated area where we have a lot of actors and a really difficult environment of technical issues, it is really useful to have one, and it is not only safer but more transparent; it would be of benefit for all. I would like to congratulate my distinguished colleague Victor Vasiliev as the Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts on the issue.

When you have a look at the last week, it was supposed to be an easy week in disarmament, so I would say to those who are quite ready to blame us that we do nothing, just in this last week there were major negotiations on a treaty on anti-satellite weapons, the issue we are debating right now was taken up in New York, and there were some events on the biological side as well. So as a vacation it is not too bad, and with this I would like to greet all the colleagues coming. It's not going to be a long vacation. Certainly we would be debating in a nice environment, but there's going to be real and hopefully productive work.

As for the timing of the next proceedings of the Group of Governmental Experts during the First Committee, it is really very relevant because indeed there would be more senior people from the capitals leading their delegations and with strong contributions from places where disarmament is debated on a daily basis, including of course Geneva, so I am looking forward to it. As for possible results of our deliberations, indeed this should include some kind of verification mechanism, because any disarmament regime or non-proliferation regime without a verification mechanism would not be viable.

Lastly, I would like to express how glad I am that this issue of outer space is tackled within the European Union, and we can present results of our internal deliberations to partners outside the European Union, so I can see growing support for this kind of thinking.

The President (*spoke in French*): Thank you for your kind words and for your statement. I now give the floor to the last speaker appearing on the list at this stage, who is Mr. Grinevich, the representative of Belarus.

Mr. Grinevich (Belarus): Mr. President, I will be brief. Allow me to congratulate you on your election to the presidency of our negotiating body. You can count on our delegation's support in discharging your mandate.

And now, to the substance. Our delegation would like to reiterate the position that we outlined during the first round of debate on the issue. We, like a number of other delegations in the Conference, favour the rapid start of negotiations on this agenda item. We consider the draft proposed by the delegations of the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation to be a good basis for negotiations. We believe that, with the necessary political will, a treaty on the prevention of the deployment of weapons in outer space can be agreed on in very short order. But, again, the main conditions are political will and the absence of any preconditions for the start of negotiations.

The President: Thank you for your kind words and for your statement. I now give the floor to Mr. Hamza Khelif, the representative of Algeria.

Mr. Khelif (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): Mr. President, the Algerian delegation would first like to once again commend the excellent manner in which you are supervising the work of the Conference.

In fact, the Algerian delegation did not have any statement prepared on this subject, having felt that it had already expressed its views thereon. However, in the light of what has been said by other delegations, we wish to make a few observations. First, we would like to say that we have taken note of what the United States Ambassador said about a recent conference of delegates from the five nuclear-weapon States parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The Algerian delegation hopes that this will constitute a valuable contribution to the Conference, enabling it to carry out its task of concluding international instruments to promote collective security which will safeguard the security of all States.

One factor in this is the prevention of an arms race in outer space. The Algerian delegation wishes to endorse what was said in a number of statements, especially that of our colleague from Egypt, which emphasized some of the guiding principles on this issue: the fact that outer space must be used for the benefit of all and exclusively for peaceful uses, as specified in the 1967 Outer Space Treaty. In this context, the draft presented by China

and the Russian Federation is a good foundation upon which to conclude an international instrument to prevent the weaponization of outer space.

(spoke in French)

The Algerian delegation has also taken note of the Cypriot delegation's response concerning the code of conduct put forward by the European Union and, in particular, the question raised by the Algerian delegation on 5 June on the possibility of reconciling the preservation of outer space for peaceful purposes, on the one hand, and the integrity of space objects and considerations of self-defence, on the other. The Algerian delegation would like to thank the representative of Cyprus for his response and to add that this question remains open to discussion and should be addressed in greater depth, as there is a need to define what is meant by self-defence in outer space activities. Does it mean that space objects ought to engage in activities that fall under self-defence, or that they might be the target of hostile activity should they pose a threat to the defence of other States? These are questions that need to be addressed.

My delegation is not taking a final position, but making informal comments. It has also learned more about how the European Union intends to arrive at a code of conduct, and wishes to know how the principles of multilateralism could be integrated in the process of negotiating this code, especially given the fact that the European Union has already set a deadline. It has got, I believe, until the end of 2013 to conclude such an agreement or code of conduct, and has also indicated that these negotiations will take place during three sessions. The Algerian delegation would therefore like to know whether everything is in place so that the organizers or initiators of this draft can go ahead and schedule three sessions to draft the code, or whether this could also be discussed so that the code could incorporate the "contributions" and concerns of all the States that would like to participate in the process. The Algerian delegation would like to thank the European Union for its initiative and believes that confidence-building measures — as the representative of China stressed — could be a significant asset to the negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament aimed at reaching a binding multilateral agreement in this area.

Finally, the Algerian delegation would like to welcome the Ambassadors who have recently joined the Conference and to assure them of its full support. At the same time, it wishes those Ambassadors who have left or are leaving the Conference on Disarmament every success.

The President: Does any delegation wish to take the floor? It seems not. I have no more speakers on my list. In that case, our work is done for today. The next official plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will take place on 7 August at 10 a.m. in this room.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.