

# Conference on Disarmament

26 February 2013

English

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## Final record of the one thousand two hundred and seventy-ninth meeting

Held Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 26 February 2013, at 10.35 a.m.

*President:* Ms. Sujata Mehta ..... (India)

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**The President:** I declare open the 1279th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I would like to begin by extending a warm welcome to our guest Mr. Khudheir Al-Khuzai, the Vice-President of Iraq.

I have the pleasure and the honour to invite the Vice-President to take the floor.

**Mr. Al-Khuzai** (Iraq): I wish to begin by thanking the representative of India and current president of the Conference on Disarmament for the opportunity to address this international forum, which is of ever-growing significance given the challenges posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. I would also like to thank the Permanent Representative of Hungary for his tireless efforts to advance the work of the Conference, and I take this occasion to commend the Secretary-General and the secretariat of the Conference for their dedication to making its work a success.

My Government is fully convinced of the need to respect and implement disarmament and non-proliferation conventions and treaties and reaffirms its support for international arrangements on disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. That is why Iraq this year acceded to the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention and the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. It has also ratified this last convention as well as the model additional protocol to the comprehensive safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency; and, following the approval by the Iraqi parliament on 9 October 2012, it is now in the final stages of ratifying the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Convention on Cluster Munitions. The Conference on Disarmament, as the sole multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament, has reached a crucial turning point. It must now redouble its efforts to reach agreement on a comprehensive and balanced programme of work that addresses the aims of all members, in accordance with the rules of procedure, so that it may move forward and repeat the successes it has achieved in the past.

Nuclear disarmament must be the Conference's top priority, in line with the special status granted to it in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, in 1978, and the conclusions of the International Court of Justice contained in its advisory opinion of 1996. Because of the destructive nature of nuclear weapons, their complete and permanent elimination is essential to the survival of humanity, and their continued existence poses an ongoing threat to international peace and security. We thus call for negotiations to begin on a programme for the phased but complete elimination of nuclear weapons, including a convention on nuclear weapons, within a set time frame.

Although positive steps have been taken recently in the international arena, the fact that the bulk of nuclear arsenals are being maintained and that new types of nuclear weapons and delivery systems are being developed continues to be a source of concern. We need to agree on a binding international legal instrument that will provide assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States that nuclear-weapon States will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons, and we must identify the means whereby progress towards this goal can be made. While security assurances are a vital element and constitute a fair and legitimate demand of non-nuclear States that have voluntarily renounced all nuclear military options by acceding to the treaty, they cannot be considered a substitute for the goal of comprehensive nuclear disarmament.

Iraq supports a multilateral, non-discriminatory and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty prohibiting the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. It considers outer space to be a common heritage of humankind that must be exploited only for peaceful purposes. The militarization of outer space would lead to an arms race that would do no service to humanity as a whole and must therefore be

prevented. The Conference on Disarmament should adopt, as promptly as possible, a new international instrument to prohibit the militarization of outer space.

Iraq also supports expansion of the Conference's membership and the appointment of a special coordinator for that purpose, especially as Iraq could benefit from such expansion. We hope the Conference will be able to make real progress on this front during the course of the year, because broadening the membership would help to revitalize this negotiating forum by bringing in new ideas while enhancing transparency and a more democratic approach to its work.

Iraq reaffirms its support for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones as this is an important step towards the elimination of nuclear weapons. It therefore supports and participates in efforts to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones in various regions, including the Middle East. Through the Conference, we wish to remind the international community of the need to implement Security Council resolution 487 (1981), and we stress that security and stability in this vital region hinge on the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction, foremost among them nuclear weapons. Such action would also achieve the aims set forth in paragraph 14 of Security Council resolution 687 (1991) and in other relevant resolutions adopted each year by consensus in the General Assembly.

Any attempt to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East must, however, be preceded by some preliminary steps. These include Israel beginning to eliminate its nuclear weapons, acceding to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and placing its nuclear facilities under the comprehensive safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Our stance on this issue reflects the position of the Arab world, as set forth in paragraphs 24 and 25 of the declaration issued by Arab leaders at the twenty-third Arab League summit, in Baghdad. In paragraph 25, the leaders welcomed the practical steps ratified by the 2010 NPT Review Conference, especially regarding the Helsinki conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. That conference was to have been held in late 2012 in Finland but it was, unfortunately, postponed on unacceptable and unjustifiable pretexts. The claim of a tense regional situation should have been used not as a justification for postponement but rather as an incentive to hold the conference on time, as it would certainly have contributed to stability in the region; indeed, all the States of the region except Israel had confirmed their participation. Hindering international efforts to establish a world free of nuclear weapons and impeding progress towards non-proliferation will cause the Non-Proliferation Treaty to collapse in the Middle East region. The Treaty would thus be incapable of providing security for the members of the League of Arab States who face the danger of nuclear armament and nuclear proliferation in the Middle East. If confronted with such a situation, these countries would be obliged to revisit their policies in this domain.

In conclusion, we reiterate our call to pursue the Conference's core objective by making a stronger effort to reach agreement on a comprehensive and balanced programme of work that addresses the aims of all members. Our great hope is that the world should be secure and free from weapons of mass destruction.

**The President:** I thank Mr. Khudheir Al-Khazaie for his statement and for his kind words. Allow me now to suspend this meeting for a moment in order to escort the Vice-President of Iraq from the chamber.

*The meeting was briefly suspended.*

**The President:** The plenary meeting is now resumed.

I would like to welcome our guest Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign and European Affairs of Slovakia.

I have the pleasure and honour to invite the Foreign Minister to take the floor.

**Mr. Lajčák** (Slovakia): Madam President, may I start by congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference and by wishing you all success in your endeavours in steering this body? My delegation is looking forward to your leadership. I assure you of Slovakia's support during your presidency.

Allow me also to thank your predecessor, Ambassador András Dékány of Hungary, for the tireless effort he invested in trying to launch substantive work in the Conference on Disarmament.

Let me begin with recent developments that undermine our collective security and create another setback to our shared desire and common endeavour to maintain peace and security and to advance global disarmament and non-proliferation goals.

On 12 February, North Korea conducted its third nuclear test, which constitutes a great threat to international peace and security. We categorically reject and protest against such irresponsible and provocative acts, which are in violation of the international obligations of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The Slovak Republic urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to stop immediately its provocations and to refrain from any action that could escalate tensions in the Korean Peninsula and undermine diplomatic efforts searching for peaceful solutions in the region. We call upon North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapon and missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner, cease all related activities and comply with all its international obligations, including Security Council resolutions.

Under these circumstances, it is rather astonishing that while international security is jeopardized and the international community is facing a great threat and flagrant violations of international law, including the non-proliferation regime, we are debating whether we should start negotiations on pressing issues of disarmament and non-proliferation.

We regret that the Conference on Disarmament once again failed to meet its obligation to establish a programme of work, thus failing to respond to numerous demands of the international community, including the United Nations Secretary-General, who recently urged us to revive substantive negotiations without delay. Given its mandate and role, the Conference cannot neglect calls by the United Nations General Assembly and must take its recommendations into account when establishing a programme of work.

We are disappointed that individual ambitions are prevailing over global security interests, thus preventing the international community from advancing on issues that would strengthen security for all.

Ongoing stalemate in the Conference and stagnation in strengthening and moving forward norms on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation endanger the global security environment and, especially, the disarmament landscape. Machinery that is not able to secure and strengthen the environment risks changing the landscape. We must prevent such erosion. In order to protect the environment, we must change our attitude and the protection mode.

Clearly, the continuing impasse is unsustainable.

My country is fully committed to creating a safer world for all of us. Disarmament, and in particular nuclear disarmament, is an important tool that can get us closer to this goal.

Slovakia has traditionally placed the principle of multilateralism at the centre of the international community's endeavour to find common and united solutions to global issues, including nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

We continue to see the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament matters. And we believe that it is so important that we cannot afford to allow its further inactivity and its deadlock to continue. This has serious consequences for the Conference in terms of its credibility and relevance to address all current security needs.

It is the member States of this Conference which bear special responsibility and must not add to preserving the status quo. We must take the lead. And others will follow. If not, others will act. If a critical mass can be collected and engaged, alternative ways and means might be explored.

We cannot overlook aspirations to open other disarmament avenues and take multilateral disarmament negotiations forward. Last year, the United Nations General Assembly adopted two resolutions establishing an open-ended working group, which will begin this year to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, and a group of governmental experts, which will commence its work next year on recommendations on possible aspects of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

My country supported these two resolutions with the aim to create new momentum and to provide additional impetus to existing disarmament mechanisms and facilitate the beginning of the Conference's substantive work on these issues.

We are convinced that this Conference is still the best place to produce global, well-founded and viable instruments. The concept of the Conference offers potential to find negotiated global solutions.

We believe that this body is central to disarmament negotiations and a key element of the whole disarmament machinery. We cannot afford to leave this body to sink due solely to our inaction.

We understand that there are different priorities for the negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament. But the fact that the Conference is in a stalemate not due to its failure in negotiations but due to its inability to agree on the programme of work on which negotiations should proceed is a matter of serious concern.

In order to overcome existing differences and to end the current impasse, we need to show increased flexibility, which would be reflected in trust and confidence in the global environment and developments therein and would help us to bridge our views. We can make progress if we work through engagement rather than enforcement, in an inclusive rather than selective process.

Slovakia continues to support the immediate commencement of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices, which would be part of the architecture of a nuclear-weapon-free world. We believe that such a treaty would be well placed in a comprehensive framework of mutually reinforcing instruments.

We share the view that such a treaty would offer a unique opportunity to create a non-discriminatory regime with equal obligations for both nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon States. It would enable us to strengthen further our common efforts to prevent such material from being used for the production of nuclear weapons or falling into the hands of groups linked to terrorism. We should work towards maximizing the non-proliferation and disarmament value of such an instrument.

Global security has undoubtedly been affected by poorly regulated trade in conventional arms. That is why Slovakia has been a strong supporter of the United Nations

process aimed at concluding the Arms Trade Treaty, an instrument for regulating the international legal trade in conventional arms, while combating illicit trafficking.

We regret that despite the great efforts of all involved we were not able to reach a consensus and to adopt the treaty at the United Nations diplomatic conference in July 2012. Nevertheless, we are convinced that there is a common determination to change the situation in this area and that we can turn our commitments into action.

In this regard, we recognize that substantial progress towards a final agreement has been made. We believe that we can and must complete our business and seek a solution which would bring us to the adoption of the treaty. Slovakia remains fully committed to securing a meaningful and effective legally binding international arms trade treaty. We believe that with sufficient political will we can find a consensus and reach an outcome acceptable to all.

From the perspective of making things doable, we regard the arms trade treaty process as a positive example of arms control and disarmament negotiations in the United Nations framework.

In conclusion, let me reaffirm the readiness of my delegation to work with all partners with a view to bringing the deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament to an end and taking multilateral disarmament negotiations forward.

**The President:** I thank Mr. Miroslav Lajčák for his statement and for his kind words.

Allow me now to suspend the meeting for a brief moment in order to escort the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign and European Affairs of Slovakia from the chamber.

*The meeting was briefly suspended.*

**The President:** The plenary meeting is now resumed.

Allow me to welcome our guest Mr. Luvsanvandan Bold, the Foreign Minister of Mongolia.

I have the pleasure and the honour to invite the Foreign Minister of Mongolia to take the floor.

**Mr. Bold (Mongolia):** It is a distinct honour for me to be granted this opportunity to address the Conference on Disarmament in this historic chamber. I would like to extend to you, Madam President, my sincere congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the current session of the Conference. While assuring you of the Mongolian delegation's full support and cooperation, we wish you every success in your endeavours to advance the work of the Conference this year.

It has been half a year since the new Reform Government was established in Mongolia, and I am pleased to reaffirm that our foreign policy, especially the high priority attached to the core issues of the Conference agenda, remains unchanged. The Government of Mongolia will continue to engage actively in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation objectives. Mongolia places great emphasis on maintaining and strengthening the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) regime as a key multilateral instrument in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We support the initiatives promoting the rigorous implementation of the 2010 action plan, which has strengthened the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. We are hopeful that all three sessions of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference will guide us to the new NPT review cycle.

Although every item on the Conference agenda is important, Mongolia attaches high priority to nuclear disarmament. In this context, we commend the outcome of the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly last year, which adopted three essential resolutions regarding the establishment of a group of governmental experts for a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT), the establishment of an open-ended working group on nuclear disarmament and the convening of a high-level meeting on 26 September in New York.

It is our opinion that the future FMCT could serve the dual objectives of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Today, we reiterate our support for the launching of FMCT negotiations in the framework of a balanced programme of work. We are of the view that such a treaty could create a useful multilateral measure to strengthen the NPT regime and constitute a step forward in nuclear disarmament.

During this year, the challenge posed by the proliferation of small arms and related materials remained on our agenda. Although last year's conference on the arms trade treaty failed to adopt a legally binding instrument on the highest possible common international standards for the transfer of conventional arms, Mongolia is hopeful that we will establish a strong, robust but effective legally binding treaty at the final United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty, to be held in March in New York.

It is our belief that nuclear-weapon-free zones greatly contribute to enhancing global and regional peace and security, expanding and strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime and advancing the goals of nuclear disarmament.

Last year marked the twentieth anniversary since my country declared its territory free from nuclear weapons. As a result of the hard work that we have carried out during the past two decades towards institutionalizing our nuclear-weapon-free status, today this initiative enjoys wide international support. The General Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution on Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status at its sixty-seventh session and welcomed the declaration by Mongolia and the joint declaration by the five nuclear-weapon States on Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status signed on 17 September 2012. In this respect, on behalf of Mongolia, I wish to express again our sincere appreciation to all member States, including all co-sponsors of the resolution, for their valuable support. We highly value and appreciate the P-5 commitment to respect our status and not to contribute to any act that would violate it. Mongolia will further seek full security assurances by institutionalizing our unique status. We are of the view that our efforts in this direction constitute a clear demonstration of Mongolia's concrete contribution towards the goal of achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world.

We strongly support and further encourage the strengthening of the existing nuclear-weapon-free zones as well as the establishment of new zones. Bearing in mind the experience accumulated so far in addressing its unique case, Mongolia is prepared to contribute to promoting the goal of ridding the Korean Peninsula of nuclear weapons through negotiation and cooperation and, on a wider scale, establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in all of North-East Asia.

We regret that the conference on a Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction has been postponed. At the same time, we express our support for the work carried out by the facilitator, Mr. Laajava, and hope all relevant actors will do their utmost to convene the conference without further delay.

My delegation is among the majority who believe that the Conference on Disarmament is the most appropriate place for conducting multilateral negotiations on disarmament. Efforts should be made to safeguard and enhance its authority.

Mongolia looks forward to an earnest solution to the ongoing stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament and supports international efforts aimed at revitalizing the work of the Conference. We believe that, given the present situation, innovative approaches need to be explored to make the resumption of meaningful disarmament negotiations possible.

Let me conclude my statement by reaffirming Mongolia's commitment for general and complete disarmament. My delegation remains ready to work with the member States towards achieving a successful outcome of this year's session. Mongolia earnestly hopes that the Conference will revitalize its work, once again fulfil its mandated role and resume its primary task of negotiating multilateral disarmament treaties.

**The President:** I thank the Foreign Minister of Mongolia, Mr. Luvsanvandan Bold, for his statement and for his kind words.

Allow me now to suspend the meeting for a brief moment in order to escort the Foreign Minister of Mongolia from the chamber.

*The meeting was briefly suspended.*

**The President:** The plenary meeting is now resumed.

I have the pleasure of welcoming Mr. Khalid bin Mohammad Al-Attiah, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Qatar, to this chamber.

I now have the honour to invite Mr. Khalid bin Mohammad Al-Attiah to take the floor.

**Mr. Al-Attiah (Qatar):** Thank you, Madam President. I will deliver my statement in Arabic.

*(spoke in Arabic)*

Allow me to begin by congratulating Ms. Sujata Mehta on her assumption of the presidency and by commending the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, Mr. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, for his unflagging commitment in encouraging the Conference to reassume its pivotal role in the disarmament sphere.

We are all well aware of the negative consequences of the arms race. The ever-more advanced technologies being adopted by armament programmes have pushed production costs up considerably; and as nations become concerned that their neighbours are arming themselves, they too channel large portions of their national product to the defence sector, doing so at the expense of sustainable development. Great strides could be made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals if some of the resources currently spent on weapons were re-earmarked for promoting economic and social development, addressing climate change, ensuring food security and eradicating poverty. We therefore hope that the Conference, as the sole multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament, will be able to reach agreement at its 2013 session on a comprehensive and balanced programme of work that reflects the interests of all member States, in accordance with the rules of procedure, thus permitting it to move on to the next phase of disarmament. This would restore both the Conference's credibility and the international community's confidence in its effectiveness, and it would confirm the continued ability of the Conference to conclude international treaties to safeguard world peace and security. Allow me, at this point, to mention the importance of genuine political will and flexibility among member States of the Conference in breaking the stalemate that has persisted since 1996 in order to advance towards the ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. The time has come for the Conference, which oversees an issue of interest and concern to the entire world, to consider expanding its membership so as to allow greater participation by non-member States. Not only would



this make the Conference more representative and democratic, it would bring in new ideas that could help the Conference to attain its goals. Qatar has expressed its desire to become a member of the Conference and submitted a request in that regard to the secretariat in June 2012. Qatar believes that the Conference continues to retain its full importance and value, as demonstrated by its past achievements in negotiating and successfully concluding important disarmament treaties. We call upon all member States to rise above vested interests and political differences to support the appointment of a special rapporteur on the question of expansion of the membership.

Guided by its convictions and unswerving support for any and all disarmament efforts as a way to further stability, peace and security, Qatar has acceded to and ratified many of the key global disarmament treaties. These include the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Biological Weapons Convention, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We confirm our unconditional readiness to honour all the provisions and obligations of those treaties. At the national level, Qatar in 2004 established the National Committee for the Prohibition of Weapons, which brings together representatives from line ministries and government institutions. The Committee is mandated to provide advice to government bodies dealing with the prohibition of weapons of all kinds, pursue the aims of international weapons prohibition treaties to which Qatar is a party and raise public awareness about such treaties. In the interest of promoting security and stability in the Middle East, Qatar has organized a number of conferences and seminars on disarmament-related issues. The Conference on Nuclear Non-Proliferation in the Gulf, for instance, was held in March 2012 to discuss the issue of non-proliferation in the Gulf region and build support for the idea of making the Middle East a nuclear-weapon-free zone. In December 2012, the National Committee for the Prohibition of Weapons cooperated with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to organize a seminar on the Chemical Weapons Convention and chemical safety management for OPCW member States in the Asia region. That event also saw the launching of the Qatar regional training centre for the prohibition of weapons, which is the first of its kind in the Middle East and Asia, and the creation of a national working group to examine a legal and regulatory framework for the institutions that will manage the use of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes in Qatar. My country remains committed to the highest standards of safety and security, to the principle of transparency and to full cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Qatar supports efforts to establish a Middle East zone free from nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. We wish to express our disappointment and our great concern at the postponement of the Helsinki conference, which was to have taken place last December, on ridding the Middle East of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. The conference was postponed despite the goodwill and readiness to participate expressed by all countries of the region except Israel, the only Middle Eastern State that is not yet a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). There can be no doubt that the postponement of that conference, apart from having negative repercussions for regional and international security, severely undermines decisions taken at the international level and will fuel the public's frustration and sense of unfairness concerning the international framework and the institutions and States comprising it. We therefore look forward to the conference taking place later this year and stress the need to exert international pressure on Israel to ensure that it does not stand in the way of the conference, that it participates in the event and that it is obliged to abide by the conference's outcomes. This will strengthen peace and security in the region and consolidate the international non-proliferation regime. Similarly, we strongly emphasize the importance of Israel acceding to the NPT and placing all its nuclear facilities under the comprehensive safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency; this would be an important step towards promoting peace and security in the region and preventing an

arms race that would threaten regional security and hamper economic and social development. At the same time, we reaffirm the right of all States, without discrimination, to acquire and use nuclear energy for peaceful ends in keeping with applicable legal obligations, the Charter of the United Nations and international law and in full cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

In conclusion, we welcome General Assembly resolution 67/56, which provides for the establishment of an open-ended working group to develop proposals to take forward nuclear disarmament negotiations and achieve genuine progress in the work of the Conference on Disarmament. This will help to strengthen the international nuclear non-proliferation regime and create a world free from nuclear weapons as a prerequisite for achieving international security and peace. We confirm the desire and commitment of Qatar to support disarmament negotiations and to honour all its disarmament obligations in pursuit of regional and international security and peace.

**The President:** I thank Dr. Khalid bin Mohammad Al-Attiyah, the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Qatar, for his statement and for his kind words.

Allow me now to suspend the meeting for a short moment in order to escort the Minister of State from the chamber.

*The meeting was briefly suspended.*

**The President:** I would like to welcome our guest Mr. Alexei Volkov, the Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan. I have the pleasure of inviting him to address the Conference.

**Mr. Volkov (Kazakhstan):** At the outset, I would like to congratulate the Permanent Representative of India, Ambassador Sujata Mehta, on her assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I am sure that your extensive experience and wise leadership will help us to achieve our common goal of overcoming the long-standing stalemate in the Conference and starting the substantive negotiations on our agenda.

Kazakhstan considers the Conference on Disarmament as the sole standing multilateral platform for the discussion of key mechanisms for strengthening international security. It is our hope that an open-ended working group established by the General Assembly of the United Nations will do its utmost to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations. We believe that it is unreasonable to suspend the Conference until an appropriate political environment emerges or to negotiate any issue outside the Conference.

The success of any multilateral instrument is measured by its efficiency, which should be based firstly on universality, a balanced approach and consideration of all the interests of all parties involved. To be sure, these things do not happen overnight, and we should be ready for that.

As we have repeatedly stated, we support the proposals of the Secretary-General of the Conference on its revitalization as well as other initiatives to revive our work, including on convening a special high-level meeting, appointing three special coordinators and establishing a group of eminent persons to find a way out of the deadlock.

We ought to give thorough thought to revising the rules of procedure and system reforms in the Conference. The consensus rule ensuring the protection of interests of all States, regardless of their size or any other criteria, should remain a sacred cow. In security matters and multilateral diplomacy, everyone should be equal.

Kazakhstan firmly supports broader membership of the Conference. We believe that wider involvement of the international community and civil society in the disarmament process would provide for meaningful work in the spirit of the United Nations.

Most of us have no doubt that we should simultaneously start negotiations on all four core areas. We stand ready to closely work with all parties concerned to adopt a balanced programme of work for the Conference.

Kazakhstan is a strong advocate of signing a universal, legally binding multilateral instrument eliminating the nuclear threat. As a country that voluntarily renounced the world's fourth largest nuclear arsenal and closed down the largest nuclear test site, in Semipalatinsk, Kazakhstan has been a consistent supporter of comprehensive nuclear disarmament.

I want to put emphasis on the Kazakhstan President's initiative to develop and adopt a United Nations universal declaration of a nuclear-weapon-free world. We invite all interested countries to take part in consultations to elaborate a mutually acceptable text of the document.

Kazakhstan also regards the establishment of zones free of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery in different regions as a reasonable practical measure of non-proliferation. It is essential to encourage such initiatives and facilitate their promotion. We hope that we will be able to implement one of the most important points of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) by creating a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction.

I should like to underline that the parties to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia are determined to complete the process of institutionalization of the Treaty and are ready to engage in dialogue with the five nuclear-weapon States to sign a protocol providing for negative security assurances. As current Chair of the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia, Kazakhstan is drafting a treaty on cooperation in preventing illicit trafficking in nuclear materials and fighting against nuclear terrorism in Central Asia, to open up opportunities for the peaceful use of nuclear energy. This April, in Almaty, we plan to hold a meeting of legal experts on the signing of the protocol on negative security assurances.

We believe that the prevention of an arms race in outer space, including problems of space security and the peaceful use of outer space, is one of the core issues of the Conference's agenda.

The negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty within the Conference is a key priority of the Kazakh delegation. Concluding this treaty would be a major step forward in preventing nuclear proliferation.

In 2012, we witnessed some positive developments in the nuclear non-proliferation area: the Seoul Nuclear Security Summit and the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference were held. These events gave new momentum to the disarmament process and contributed to the further strengthening of the Treaty.

In this light, I would like to express our confidence that a number of other important events to be held in 2013 — including a conference in Oslo on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, the second conference on the Arms Trade Treaty, in New York, and the second Preparatory Committee meeting, in Geneva, for the 2015 NPT Review Conference — will be a success and enhance our fruitful dialogue.

We also hope that the United Nations high-level meeting on nuclear disarmament on 26 September 2013 will make a significant contribution to building a safer world free of nuclear weapons.

Today, on 26 February in Almaty, Kazakhstan, the Six-Party Talks on the nuclear programme of Iran started their next round of negotiations. We hope that this event will be

instrumental in promoting a convergence of approaches and will contribute to the peaceful settlement of this important issue. Undoubtedly, the positive development of the negotiations would foster not only regional stability but the entire global security system. The Government of Kazakhstan is ready to do its utmost to make this meeting a success.

Kazakhstan is willing to contribute to the noble cause of non-proliferation and the development of peaceful nuclear energy. In this regard, we have offered to host an international nuclear fuel bank under the auspices of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

We believe that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is a necessary and important prerequisite for nuclear disarmament. We welcome the decision of President Obama to seek the United States Senate ratification of this Treaty, and hope that it will be an important signal to other countries to follow suit.

We strongly condemn the nuclear test conducted by North Korea in violation of Security Council resolutions. In this regard, Kazakhstan calls for the immediate resumption of the Six-Party Talks on North Korea's nuclear programme and urges Pyongyang to refrain from any steps that could lead to the escalation of tension.

A General Assembly resolution declaring 29 August, the day when the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site was closed down, as the International Day against Nuclear Tests — on the initiative of Kazakhstan — is fully consistent with the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty's objectives. In August 2012, Kazakhstan hosted an international conference entitled "From a Nuclear Test Ban to a Nuclear-Weapons-Free World" that adopted an appeal to governments and parliaments around the world to take efficient measures to diminish the nuclear threat.

We have also developed the ATOM (Abolish Testing: Our Mission) project in order to raise awareness in the international community about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear tests. Its mission is to unite global support for the final abolishment of nuclear-weapon tests and to complete the elimination of nuclear weapons by all countries.

In conclusion, I would like to wish you every success in your future work and express my confidence that, by strengthening mutual trust in the international community and developing political will, we can find keys to a common understanding of security problems and shape new models to minimize risks and threats related to the presence of weapons of mass destruction or the ambition to possess such weapons.

**The President:** I thank Mr. Alexei Volkov for his statement and also for his kind words.

Permit me to suspend this meeting briefly for a moment in order to enable me to escort the Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan from this chamber.

*The meeting was briefly suspended.*

**The President:** The plenary meeting is now resumed.

It is my privilege, on behalf of the Conference, to now welcome our guest Dr. Toshiko Abe, the Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan. It is my pleasure to invite Dr. Abe to now take the floor.

**Ms. Abe (Japan):** It is a great honour to have this opportunity to address the Conference on Disarmament today. I welcome and strongly support the efforts of the President to pull the Conference out of its prolonged stalemate and to revitalize its work.

Disarmament and non-proliferation comprise one of Japan's most important policy areas. Foreign Minister Kishida, who assumed office in December of last year, comes from

Hiroshima, and at his first press conference he stated that it was his strongly held intent to deal with nuclear disarmament in a proactive manner. Along with the Foreign Minister, I am determined to work earnestly for progress in this area, and it is indeed for that reason that I am here at the Conference.

The international community currently faces a number of difficult challenges to its efforts to further disarmament and non-proliferation in order to find a way forward. It is especially important for all countries to deepen engagement and involvement at the political level.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea announced that it had conducted its third nuclear test on 12 February. This is totally unacceptable, as it constitutes a grave challenge to the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime centred on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and seriously undermines the peace and security of North-East Asia as well as the international community. In addition, remarks made in the Conference's plenary session by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea about the Republic of Korea on 19 February were utterly inappropriate to this venerable multilateral disarmament negotiating body, and were unacceptable to Japan. Japan renews its strong demand for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to immediately and fully implement relevant Security Council resolutions. In addition, Japan once again strongly urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to take concrete action towards comprehensively resolving outstanding issues of concern, including its abductions and its nuclear and missile programmes.

Within the international community, there is broad understanding that the next logical step in multilateral disarmament negotiations is to commence work on a fissile material cut-off treaty. Why the Conference has for so many years failed to initiate such negotiations despite the wide support for them is hard to understand. It is no wonder, then, that in the eyes of the citizens of each of our countries — burdened as they are by the fiscal predicament of recent years — there may appear to be no choice but to explore alternatives to the deadlock in which we find ourselves in this Conference. I therefore call upon all State representatives to redouble efforts to reach a breakthrough and resolve this problem.

Even as we extol the vision of a world free of nuclear weapons, in order to advance nuclear disarmament it is necessary to propose concrete steps for achieving this aim. Accordingly, Japan has until now devoted itself to realistic and steady diplomatic efforts to this end.

One example of this is the launching, with like-minded countries, of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative. The Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) is an action-oriented group that will continue to contribute to progress in disarmament and non-proliferation by putting forward concrete proposals, such as the reporting form it drafted to enhance the transparency of nuclear armament. As I stated at the start of my remarks, political engagement is indispensable to the success of our efforts here. Hence, all 10 NPDI members have committed to the group's activities at the ministerial level.

As the only country ever to suffer nuclear bombings during wartime, Japan knows from its own experience the appalling humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons. Therefore, at the international conference on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, to be held this March in Oslo, our experts and other representatives will participate and actively contribute to the discussion. In addition, through disarmament and non-proliferation education, Japan is determined to build a foundation for a world without nuclear weapons by passing on knowledge of the humanitarian consequences of nuclear-weapon use all over the world, and especially to younger generations. The disasters of Hiroshima and Nagasaki must never be repeated. Yesterday, I took the opportunity to view

the permanent exhibit on the atomic bombings here in the United Nations Office at Geneva. It is my sincere wish that the exhibit will promote understanding of the reality of the tragedy caused by the use of nuclear weapons and further deepen awareness of the need for the entire international community to strengthen efforts to bring about disarmament. I encourage all of you here on the front lines of nuclear disarmament to go and see it.

**The President:** I thank our guest Dr. Toshiko Abe, the Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, for her statement and for her very kind words. Permit me to suspend this meeting for a moment while I escort Dr. Abe from the chamber.

*The meeting was briefly suspended.*

**The President:** The plenary meeting is resumed.

I have the privilege to welcome on behalf of the Conference our next guest, Mr. Pham Binh Minh, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam.

I have the pleasure to invite the Foreign Minister, Mr. Pham, to take the floor.

**Mr. Pham Binh Minh (Viet Nam):** I am privileged to address the Conference on Disarmament today. This historic room has witnessed the signing of many peace agreements, including the Geneva Accords on ending hostilities and restoring peace in Indochina in 1954. These peace agreements helped bring about peace to many nations around the world. On this occasion, I would like to congratulate Ambassador Sujata Mehta, Permanent Representative of India, on her assumption of the presidency. I believe that the efforts made by the President and other participants will help break the deadlock for substantive discussions.

Since its first participation in the Conference's meetings in 1983 and its becoming a full member of the Conference in 1996, Viet Nam has always attached great importance to the Conference on Disarmament as the sole global forum responsible for discussions and negotiations on international disarmament treaties. It was right here that the most important disarmament treaties came into being, such as the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Biological Weapons Convention, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty etc. Given those achievements, the international community cannot help expecting new breakthroughs in the Conference, which would contribute to the strengthening of peace, security and stability in the world. In this year 2013, there are many expectations.

Firstly, at its sixty-seventh session the United Nations General Assembly adopted two resolutions providing for discussion mechanisms on topics of great interest in the Conference in recent years, namely nuclear disarmament and the fissile material cut-off treaty. Viet Nam is of the view that these discussions can contribute to the consolidation of broader consensus on these issues. The Conference must play an important role in this process.

Secondly, the April Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention, a major success of the Conference on Disarmament, will provide us an opportunity to affirm the role of the Conference in developing such treaties.

Thirdly, the second session of the Preparatory Committee of the 2015 NPT Review Conference, scheduled for May 2013 in Geneva, offers us another opportunity to take stock of the implementation of the outcome of the 2010 Review Conference, while charting out concrete goals and actions for the 2015 Review Conference.

Fourthly, the United Nations General Assembly high-level meeting on nuclear disarmament scheduled for September will provide a good opportunity for States to discuss and manifest their political will at a high level in the search for solutions to the challenges in disarmament, particularly in nuclear disarmament.

Fifthly, it is regrettable that the conference on a nuclear-weapon-free Middle East could not take place as scheduled in 2012. It is important that we strive for an early convening of the conference, thus contributing to the joint effort in the field of disarmament. It is imperative for us to meet these expectations. We need to redouble our efforts to overcome the differences in security priorities and approaches to disarmament of each country with a view to reaching solutions to substantive issues and meeting the demands of the international community. As was urged by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, in his message to our Conference earlier this year, we cannot afford to waste another year.

Once victimized by wars and still struggling to overcome their consequences, Viet Nam's consistent policy is to uphold peace, oppose war and support all efforts towards disarmament, especially the disarmament of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and international law. Viet Nam's commitments to peace and disarmament are clearly and consistently manifested in its diverse bilateral relations with other Members of the United Nations, as well as in its concrete contributions at multilateral forums, regional and international cooperation mechanisms, such as the South-East Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, or disarmament mechanisms within regional and international forums, particularly the Security Council, where Viet Nam was a non-permanent member in 2008–2009. As a member of the Conference on Disarmament, Viet Nam has acceded to or ratified all the disarmament treaties negotiated and adopted by the Conference. As an active member of the Conference and one of its Presidents in 2009, Viet Nam has always given full support and made contributions to the work of the Conference. We are aware of the challenges facing the Conference in reaffirming its role and credibility, and share the common concern and interest of other members about the long deadlock. Failure to overcome this will erode the international community's confidence and the cooperative goodwill of countries within the Conference and in the domain of disarmament at large. I am pleased that the Conference has approved its agenda for 2013, and believe that an early endorsement and implementation of a balanced and comprehensive programme of work is the only way to break the deadlock. To this end, the members of the Conference are called upon to display more goodwill, greater flexibility and constructive cooperation to work out a solution able to satisfy the interests of all stakeholders, while maintaining and promoting the fundamental principles that made for the Conference's successes over the past decades, including the principle of consensus.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate the strong commitment of the Government of Viet Nam to supporting all efforts towards general and complete disarmament. Viet Nam stands ready to collaborate with all member States to work out a solution to help the Conference produce positive results. We welcome and will actively engage in the deliberations for initiatives aimed at promoting the Conference's work.

**The President:** I thank the Foreign Minister of Viet Nam, Mr. Pham Binh Minh, for his statement and for his very kind words.

With your permission, I will now suspend this meeting for a few moments while I escort the Foreign Minister out of this chamber.

*The meeting was briefly suspended.*

**The President:** The plenary meeting is resumed. It is my pleasure to welcome our guest Mr. Urmas Paet, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Estonia, to the Conference. I have the privilege to invite Mr. Urmas Paet to address the Conference.

**Mr. Paet (Estonia):** Madam President, let me congratulate you on assuming the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament, and I would also like to extend our best wishes to the five other Presidents of the 2013 session.

At the outset, I would like to echo the deepest concern and condemnation expressed by the whole international community about the nuclear test conducted by North Korea on 12 February 2013. This act is a clear violation of Security Council resolutions 1718 (2006), 1874 (2009) and 2087 (2013) and poses a grave challenge to the international nuclear non-proliferation regime, including to the goals and objectives we are all trying to reach in this very room.

We agree with those who believe that the next logical multilateral step towards nuclear disarmament is to start negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) – a universal agreement banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. We deeply regret that another year is going by with the Conference on Disarmament unable to start negotiations or even agree on a programme of work.

As the stalemate continues and the Conference remains deadlocked, we have witnessed several calls to address the FMCT outside the Conference framework. Obviously this does not come to anyone as a surprise, as the frustration over the impasse has grown over the years. However, we believe that, for the sake of the universal nature of the future treaty, the overall health of the international arms control regime and effective multilateralism, the negotiation and conclusion of the FMCT must be carried out within the Conference. Broad consensus is absolutely essential in order to gather more signatures and ratifications of the FMCT in comparison with the current number of States parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

On the other hand, the latter does not mean that the interested countries should not share views about the possible elements of the FMCT in other forums and different venues. We welcome the initiative to establish a group of governmental experts with a mandate to make recommendations on possible aspects that could contribute to the treaty. Apparently, this is not the first time that views on possible aspects or elements of the FMCT are being discussed. Numerous working papers have been developed, thematic discussions have been held, and even draft treaties have been proposed. Ideas have been shared about verification and compliance requirements, transparency, entry into force and the scope of the treaty.

The existence of a credible verification mechanism for the FMCT seems to be one of the most crucial elements in future negotiations. Strong verification mechanisms help us to maintain confidence in the effectiveness and transparency of multilateral treaties. However, there is no single formula for addressing verification issues, as multilateral arms control architecture already offers us several different approaches. For instance, the Biological Weapons Convention does not have a comprehensive verification system at all, while the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty has an extensive three-pillared verification regime. The verification system of the NPT was put in place after the treaty was concluded and is still being improved. So, there are different options that need to be discussed and debated. The example of the NPT shows us that different features of the treaty, like the model safeguards agreement or additional protocol, can be negotiated separately not only in space but also in time.

Time is the value we have exhausted already for too long, and delaying the start of the FMCT negotiation process is not a feasible option. Let me at this point also reiterate Estonia's request to participate fully and equally in the disarmament discussions as a full member of the Conference. We believe that the expansion of the membership could become an achievement for the Conference and increase its relevance. In the light of the above, we reiterate our call for the early nomination of a special rapporteur to review the issue of membership. We are all aware of the fact that the appointment of a rapporteur does not automatically lead to any particular outcome and that decisions are taken by the member States of the Conference.



Let me also say a few words about another significant process in which we are currently engaged in our capitals, also in Geneva and New York: preparations for the final conference on the Arms Trade Treaty. Ten years ago the idea of the Treaty was put forward by Nobel laureates, and nearly seven years have passed since the first resolution on an arms trade treaty was adopted by the United Nations. Today, after years of hard work, we have come to the point where an historic agreement is within our reach. We are looking forward to concluding a strong, balanced and effective arms trade treaty at the final conference in March.

**The President:** It is a pleasure to thank Mr. Urmas Paet, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Estonia, for his statement and for his kind words.

Allow me to suspend the meeting for a moment while I escort the Foreign Minister out of the room.

*The meeting was briefly suspended.*

**The President:** The meeting is now resumed, and we have exhausted our speakers' list for the morning. Would any other delegation like to take the floor at this stage?

The representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has asked for the floor.

**Mr. Ri Jang Gon** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Let me first address the delegations of Slovakia, Kazakhstan and Estonia. My delegation condemns and rejects the allegations made by those countries against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and against the right to self-determination and right to sovereignty and, furthermore, the right to development.

Let me ask those countries whether or not each member State is equal in international relations, if each country has the right to development and, furthermore, the right to launch satellites, and again whether or not each member State has the right to defend its own sovereignty. This is the fundamental question to be answered first by those countries. Our nuclear test is a legitimate countermeasure to defend our sovereignty. I do not think those three countries can tolerate their own sovereignty. We did take action to defend our sovereignty, and I hope those countries would look at the situation very objectively, and not following the hostile forces' logic. I have more to say about this, but I will stop here for those countries. We plan to speak at a later stage with a very firm stand.

Allow me to address Japan. First, let me draw the attention of member States to – whenever we are addressing Japan, we have to remember what country Japan is. Japan is a war criminal, a defeated State. It has an international obligation to uphold peace principles. But look at Japan now, in the past and then now. It is systematically destroying these principles. It has a pipe dream of expansion, which is very dangerous. It has a military alliance with the United States. Where does the danger come from? It is very clear that the danger comes from Japan in pursuing its hostile policy with the United States; and our nuclear test, as I said before, is a legitimate countermeasure to defend our sovereignty and our right to development. We have to address the development of peaceful uses of outer space. Each country has the right to launch satellites. Japan – look at Japan: even spy satellites. The delegation of Japan also mentioned, among other things, the nuclear bombing. To my delegation, those remarks all sound very, very hypocritical. Her remarks are really hypocritical: she does not say who did it. Why? And lastly, let me ask Japan to give up and discard the continued hostile policy and action against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in collaboration with its superiors.

**The President:** I thank the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The delegate of Japan has asked for the floor.

**Mr. Amano (Japan):** Since the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea referred to the Japanese defence policy, I would like to briefly respond about the nature of the Japanese policy. As all know, Japan maintains an exclusively defence-oriented policy, and therefore exercises conducted by the self-defence forces of Japan do not target any particular country or area. Moreover, the ballistic missile defence system which Japan has decided to introduce is purely defensive and does not threaten any country or area surrounding Japan. As for the satellites, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea delegation referred to the Japanese programme of space development. I would like to exercise my right of reply to that since – well, first I would like to stress that in Japan it is stated in the Space Basic Act, which entered into force in 2008, that Japan must abide by the related international treaties and observe the peaceful principle of the Japanese Constitution when developing and using space. Therefore, I must say that the comment made by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea delegation is totally pointless. Rather, I would like to reiterate that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is not ceasing to conduct its missile development activities, including missile launches, in flagrant violation of the relevant Security Council resolutions. Such activities by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are not only a grave challenge to the peace and security of North-East Asia but also that of the whole international community, as our Deputy Minister clearly said. Before the Democratic People's Republic of Korea criticizes us and other countries' activities, I urge it to begin by straightening up its own behaviour and complying fully with the related Security Council resolutions and other international commitments.

**The President:** I thank the Ambassador of Japan for his remarks. I recognize the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

**Mr. Ri Jang Gon (Democratic People's Republic of Korea):** Japan's intervention obliges my delegation to respond again. Japan, as I said to all the members here in this house, is a war criminal and a defeated State. It has the obligation to uphold those principles; words should be translated into action. No action at all is hypocritical. Japan is collaborating militarily with outside forces targeting legitimate member States, and maybe even more so if we look at past crimes beyond the Korean Peninsula. As for the satellite, Japan should answer first whether or not member States have the right to use outer space for peaceful purposes and the right to launch satellites. Let us not confuse satellites with missiles and things like that. My delegation totally rejects the remarks and condemns and urges Japan to uphold peace principles and liquidate the past crimes openly, very openly, and put it into practice.

**The President:** I see no other request for the floor. This concludes our business for today.

The Ambassador of the Republic of Korea has asked for the floor.

**Mr. Kwon Haeryong (Republic of Korea):** My delegation already expressed its position clearly on North Korea's nuclear tests in a detailed manner at the last plenary, and today I will be brief.

Today, we heard some Ministers condemning North Korea's nuclear tests. So far, 75 countries and 5 international organizations and regional groups have issued a statement which condemned North Korea's nuclear tests. This clearly shows that North Korea's repeated nuclear tests and missile launches pose a serious threat to global peace and stability and the international non-proliferation regime. So, my delegation urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to become a more responsible member of the international community by complying with international obligations, including Security Council resolutions.

**The President:** I thank the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea for his remarks. I give the floor now to the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

**Mr. Ri Jang Gon** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Let me say something more about the real situation on the ground in the Korean Peninsula. Look at the Korean Peninsula: very small country, small peninsula, yet still divided into north and south. If all member States here just focused a little more on the southern part, there they can see foreign troops, ground forces with sophisticated weapons, with nuclear weapons – targeting who? The northern part of the Korean Peninsula. And they engage in large-scale joint militarization every year, and in a few days they will conduct another very big-scale pre-emptive nuclear exercise. Yet they are saying “defensive”. Who can believe that? They are saying “defensive”. The United States is far away from the Korean Peninsula, across the Pacific — very far, you can imagine — but their hands are on the Korean Peninsula. Yet they are saying it is defensive. This is nonsense. And the threat comes where? The threat is hovering on the Korean Peninsula due to South Korea's pursuing this hostile United States policy towards us. Our nuclear test is the resentment of our people, men in uniform, to defend our sovereignty. It is a legitimate right to exercise. Each country has the right, all countries have the right to do that, and here, members of the Conference on Disarmament, we are discussing here to safeguard their own security, their own sovereignty. No one can tolerate this sovereignty. This is an exercise we never accepted: the United States-led anti-Democratic People's Republic of Korea resolution. We never accepted and will not accept a resolution of a discriminatory nature, a double standard, high-handedness. We never did so and will never do so.

**The President:** I thank the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The Ambassador of the Republic of Korea has asked for the floor.

**Mr. Kwon Haeryong** (Republic of Korea): Around 10 years ago, the Republic of Korea and North Korea reached an agreement on denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. Since then, there have been no nuclear weapons in the territory of the Republic of Korea. On the other hand, North Korea has developed nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes. North Korea has conducted nuclear tests three times and launched ballistic missiles three times. No nuclear weapons in the territory of the Republic of Korea – nuclear weapons and long-range missiles in the territory of North Korea. Where does the threat on the Korean Peninsula come from? The joint military exercise named “Key Resolve” is purely defensive in nature, as I mentioned before, and carried out to deter military provocation and the threat from North Korea, which has raised increasing tensions and disrupted stability on the Korean Peninsula, particularly by conducting nuclear tests two weeks ago.

**The President:** I thank the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea for his remarks. The representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has asked for the floor again.

**Mr. Ri Jang Gon** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I have a little more to say about nuclear weapons. Look at South Korea. They say it is under the nuclear umbrella of the United States. In other words, as for South Korea, the nuclear weapons are there, ground forces are there. It is a real fact. How many? How many ground forces with weapons — nuclear weapons — are there? This is really nonsense. The foreign troops, American troops, are there conducting exercises with South Korea and saying it is defensive. And the Armistice Agreement has not yet been converted into a peace treaty. On several occasions we asked for and urged the replacement of this Armistice Agreement with a permanent mechanism, yet this was rejected. This is the reality; and the danger is coming from where? Member States can understand very fully with objective minds. Lastly, I reserve the right to make a statement, possibly tomorrow.

**The President:** I thank the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. I see no other request for the floor at this point.

Dear colleagues, I feel constrained to refer back to remarks I had made at our plenary meeting last Tuesday. I had urged delegations last week to maintain a high level of courtesy in our discussions in keeping with the practice and mandate of this forum. Under the rules of procedure, each delegation has the right to raise any subject relevant to the work of the Conference at a plenary meeting, and to have the full opportunity of presenting its views. I intend to follow the rules of procedure faithfully. At the same time, it is my hope that each of us would fulfil the responsibility that comes with this right.

This concludes our business for today. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be tomorrow, Wednesday, 27 February, at noon.

*The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.*