



Conference on Disarmament

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English

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President: Ms. Sujata Mehta (India)

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The President: I call to order the 1282nd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. To mark International Women's Day, which occurred last Friday, 8 March, we will hear Ms. Beatrice Fihn, a representative of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, who will speak to the Conference on Disarmament about her organization's perspectives on disarmament.

Ms. Fihn (Women's International League for Peace and Freedom): Madam President, thank you for inviting the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) to address the Conference on Disarmament on the occasion of International Women's Day.

International Women's Day is an occasion upon which WILPF, together with other women's organizations all over the world, highlights the injustices and discrimination that women face every day. WILPF has since 1915 emphasized the link between women's rights and military expenditure, the arms trade and armed violence.

In just a few days, all United Nations Member States will gather in New York for the second United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty to agree on the world's first multilateral international arms trade treaty. WILPF has since 2006 been engaged in the arms trade treaty process in order to support the establishment of an international tool that will prevent the transfer of arms when there is a possibility that these weapons might be used to violate international humanitarian law or human rights, or undermine socioeconomic development.

Yesterday, our annual International Women's Day seminar focused on the inclusion of a criterion in the arms trade treaty to prevent arms trade if there is a possibility that the weapons might be used to facilitate gender-based violence.

Rape and other forms of gender-based violence have increasingly become a deliberate tactic of terror in war and other conflict situations and are often fuelled by the increased presence of weapons. For example, more than 400,000 women between the ages of 15 and 49 experienced rape between 2006 and 2007 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. That is equivalent to 1,152 women raped every day, 48 women raped every hour, or four women raped every five minutes. Despite this, arms sales to this country continue, with a wide range of weapons, ammunition and related equipment being supplied.

Women around the world suffer different and serious violations due to the proliferation and misuse of arms and the long-lasting effects of armed conflict.

We therefore call on all States that will participate in the arms trade treaty negotiations to make sure that the treaty includes a solid reference to gender-based violence, a reference that does not undermine existing international law and places gender-based violence among other criteria, such as violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.

We want the arms trade treaty to be strong on this issue. We want it to be a credible tool for addressing the impact of arms sales on women all over the world. The treaty must be based on and contribute to the growing body of international law on violence against women.

So today I urge you all to support a strong arms trade treaty that will stop transfers of conventional arms where there is a substantial risk that the weapons are likely to be used to facilitate acts of gender-based violence, including rape and other forms of sexual violence.

The humanitarian perspective inherent in the demand for an effective international arms trade treaty is also at the heart of discussions that took place last week in Oslo on nuclear weapons. One hundred and twenty-seven States, along with many international and

civil-society organizations, gathered to explore and discuss the humanitarian impact of the use of nuclear weapons. This discussion was instrumental in reframing the discourse around nuclear weapons, focusing on the direct humanitarian consequences of their use rather than on myths of their value for state security.

The key conclusions from this conference, highlighted by Norway's Foreign Minister in his closing summary, were that no State or international body could adequately address the humanitarian emergency caused by a nuclear-weapon detonation; that nuclear weapons have demonstrated devastating immediate and long-term effects; and that such effects will not be constrained by national borders and will have regional and global impacts.

The humanitarian approach to nuclear weapons challenges the foundation of possessing nuclear weapons. It undermines any incentive for proliferation and encourages disarmament of existing arsenals, something that should be in the interest of all States around the world. We therefore welcome Mexico's announcement that it will host a follow-up conference to deepen the international community's understanding of these weapons of terror.

This initiative recognizes that nuclear-weapon-free countries have an important role to play and highlights the need for preventive measures. We look forward to continuing this discussion with all States and organizations, both in the traditional disarmament forums and in Mexico.

The President: I thank Ms. Fihn for her timely and thought-provoking statement. We now turn to the regular agenda of the Conference on Disarmament. The plenary today is devoted to an exchange on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. The first speaker on the list for today is Ireland on behalf of the European Union. Mr. Andras Kos will speak.

Mr. Kos (Ireland): Madam President, I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The following countries align themselves with this declaration: Croatia, Albania, Iceland, Montenegro, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ukraine, Armenia and Georgia.

In our previous statements on this issue, we reaffirmed several times that the immediate commencement and early conclusion of the negotiation in the Conference on Disarmament of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (FMCT) on the basis of document CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein and subsequently referred to in document CD/1864 remains a clear priority for the European Union.

Let me emphasize that for the European Union launching and concluding these negotiations are urgent and important. An effective FMCT would constitute an essential step to seek a safer world for all and to create the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons, in accordance with the goals of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Logically, an FMCT constitutes the next multilateral instrument to be negotiated in the nuclear disarmament field, as a complement to the NPT and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. National security concerns, while legitimate, can and should be addressed as part of the negotiation process rather than as a prerequisite. We also believe that confidence-building measures can be taken immediately, without the need to wait for the commencement of formal negotiations. This is the rationale behind our calling on all States possessing nuclear weapons to declare and uphold a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

All European Union member States supported General Assembly resolution 67/53 of 3 December 2012 on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons

or other nuclear explosive devices. The mechanism established by this resolution represents a useful contribution to helping the Conference on Disarmament without undermining its authority and primary role in multilateral disarmament negotiations.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Germany and the Netherlands for organizing two useful technical expert meetings in May and August 2012 on the topic of the FMCT in support of the early commencement of negotiations within the Conference on Disarmament. They enhanced our knowledge and understanding of technical issues.

The Conference, in accordance with its mandate, has a crucial role to negotiate multilateral treaties. It is in the hands of all members to restore the Conference to the central role it can play in strengthening the non-proliferation regime and multilateral disarmament. We all bear the responsibility of making the Conference deliver according to its mandate. Its ongoing stalemate remains deeply troubling. In this context, we continue to urge the last remaining State to join consensus in adopting a programme of work which will, *inter alia*, enable negotiations on an FMCT.

We reaffirm our commitment to engaging in substantive discussions on all the other core issues on the Conference on Disarmament agenda.

Madam President, in line with our engagement with civil society, we are looking forward to enhanced interaction between civil society and the Conference on Disarmament, thus strengthening the contribution of NGOs and research institutions to the work of the Conference. In this regard we welcome today's address by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom to the Conference.

The President: I thank the representative of the European Union for his statement. I now give the floor to Ambassador Vallim Guerreiro, the Permanent Representative of Brazil, who will speak on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition.

Mr. Vallim Guerreiro (Brazil): Madam President, I have the honour of taking the floor on behalf of the seven members of the New Agenda Coalition (NAC): Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and Sweden.

We would like to congratulate you on acceding to the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. We stand ready to support efforts to achieve agreement on a much-awaited programme of work and the resumption of substantive work in the Conference. We would like to welcome the participation of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom in the work of the Conference and recognize the important contribution of civil society to furthering the cause of nuclear disarmament. As we celebrated International Women's Day on 8 March, we also wish to recognize the important role women can and should play in the area of disarmament, and the need for equality and increased participation in our activities.

As Conference on Disarmament members are aware, NAC is a cross-regional group established in 1998 to further the cause of nuclear disarmament. Since its establishment, NAC has worked actively to promote full and effective implementation of all nuclear disarmament obligations and commitments. The achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons remain our primary goal.

While considerable progress has been made to strengthen the non-proliferation norm, the goal of nuclear disarmament remains elusive.

Our countries strongly believe that the only guarantee that nuclear weapons will never be used is their total elimination. Until this goal is achieved, we also reaffirm the legitimate right of non-nuclear-weapon States to receive legally binding negative security assurances from nuclear-weapon States. We continue to emphasize that nuclear

disarmament should be conducted under effective international control and be based on the principles of transparency, verification and irreversibility.

The year 2013 represents an opportunity to achieve progress towards a nuclear-weapon-free world. The focus on nuclear disarmament, as evidenced by a series of significant meetings which will take place this year, bears testimony to the overwhelming view of the international community that urgent progress is needed to advance our shared goal of a world free from nuclear weapons. The NPT Preparatory Committee, the open-ended working group of the General Assembly and the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament, as well as the Conference on Disarmament, provide opportunities to accelerate progress on nuclear disarmament. In addition, Norway hosted an international conference on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons aimed at developing a greater understanding of the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons. It is our hope that all States will seize these opportunities in a common endeavour to permanently rid our world of the threat posed by nuclear weapons.

Next month Geneva will host the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference. NAC looks forward to contributing constructively to this meeting and to working with all parties to secure a successful outcome.

The action plan that emerged from the 2010 NPT Review Conference not only reaffirmed the unequivocal commitment of the nuclear-weapon States to accomplishing the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, leading to nuclear disarmament, in accordance with article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, but also recommitted the nuclear-weapon States to accelerating progress on the steps agreed on in 1995 and 2000 to advance the implementation of article VI. The Conference also called upon all States parties to exert all efforts to promote universal adherence to the Treaty, and not to undertake any actions that could negatively affect prospects for the universality of the Treaty. The blueprint provided by the 2010 action plan on nuclear disarmament, including the points contained in action 5, must be implemented as a priority, and we look forward, in this regard, to receiving reports on the accelerated implementation of these commitments.

Pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons, NAC believes that nuclear-weapon-free zones represent a valuable means of enhancing global and regional peace and security, strengthening nuclear non-proliferation efforts and contributing towards the goal of nuclear disarmament. We are pleased that the majority of the world's countries are part of such zones, and we look forward to further progress in this regard. The establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction would undoubtedly produce significant benefits not just for the region but also more broadly. The 1995 resolution on the Middle East is an essential element of the outcome of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, on the basis of which the Treaty was indefinitely extended without a vote. The resolution holds an important place in the overall NPT architecture and remains valid until its full implementation.

We regret that the conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction was not convened in 2012 as agreed in the 2010 action plan. All efforts must be exerted towards the convening of the conference without further delay. We commend the ongoing efforts of the conference facilitator, Jaakko Laajava. We acknowledge the seriousness with which States of the region have approached this endeavour. We call on the facilitator, the co-conveners and the wider international community to assist the States of the region in any way they can in this important endeavour.

Neither the pursuit nor the retention of nuclear weapons can enhance regional or international security. NAC strongly condemns the nuclear test carried out by the

Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 12 February in violation of its obligations under the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions. We urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to fulfil its commitments under the Six-Party Talks, including those in the September 2005 joint statement; to abandon all nuclear-weapon programmes; to return without delay to the NPT; and to place all its nuclear facilities under International Atomic Energy Agency verification, with a view to achieving the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula in a peaceful manner.

The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the last treaty negotiated in the Conference on Disarmament, remains an important outstanding issue on which further progress is urgently required. The Treaty is a core element of the international non-proliferation and disarmament regime, raising the threshold for the acquisition of nuclear weapons, preventing a qualitative arms race and reducing the reliance on nuclear weapons in national security strategies. The entry into force of the Treaty would also strengthen confidence in the international security system through the establishment of an effective verification mechanism.

The continued modernization of nuclear arsenals and the development of advanced and new types of nuclear weapons, together with the vast resources allocated for this purpose, run counter to the undertakings by the nuclear-weapon States.

We urge States to refrain from any action that would undermine the letter and spirit of relevant multilateral disarmament instruments and their universalization. All States are also urged to pursue policies that are fully compatible with the objective of achieving and maintaining a world without nuclear weapons.

Each unfulfilled agreement and undertaking reached at review conferences diminishes the credibility of the NPT and undermines confidence among State parties. Accordingly, the onus is on all States parties to assume their respective obligations to ensure the full and effective implementation of the NPT, including the agreements reached at the 1995, 2000 and 2010 NPT Review Conferences.

It is no longer credible that progress on nuclear disarmament is left to languish. Let 2013 be the year in which we begin in earnest to finally eradicate the continued threat of mass annihilation that looms over humanity. NAC stands ready to play its part.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Brazil for his statement and for his kind words. I now give the floor to the representative of Spain.

Mr. Gil Catalina (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Madam President, first of all, allow me to thank you for the commitment and dedication you have shown during your presidency these past weeks. I especially appreciate your commendable gesture of holding consultations with all member States of the Conference – an exercise in transparency that is not required under the rules of procedure but rather was your own personal initiative. However, despite all your efforts and those of your team, we have yet to reach consensus on a programme of work. Your predecessor, Ambassador Dékány, was also unable to achieve this, despite his exemplary approach in which he showed just the right amount of creativity and flexibility. With this setback we have missed a new opportunity for this forum — which was established to negotiate multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation agreements — to fulfil its founding mandate. So, without further delay, I will briefly present the key elements of my country's position on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). As an aside, I would like to apologize to the distinguished delegates for having to limit myself to once again presenting our position, which is so boring that, believe me, I would much prefer that we start negotiations.

Spain is of the view that the Shannon mandate and the model set out in document CD/1864 continue to provide a valid framework for negotiations. It has been said a

thousand times in this meeting room, but is still worth repeating, that under article 30 of the rules of procedure all delegations have the option of raising any subject they deem relevant, while article 18 provides for something that my delegation finds regrettable but that others consider to be this forum's great virtue, namely, the ability to block negotiations at any stage. With these guarantees in place it is difficult to understand why some parties refuse to undertake negotiations on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons – an issue that, regardless of whether it is the logical next step, simply cannot be put off. With regard to the triad of definitions, scope and verification, my delegation would like to avoid the maximalist approaches that often hold the Conference hostage.

In our view, an FMCT should include definitions of at least three aspects: fissile material, the production of fissile material and production plants. The definition of fissile material should be narrow enough to allow for the implementation of an effective verification system that is flexible enough to make the treaty effective over a long period. As for the treaty's scope, starting from the assumption that the treaty should entail obligations as soon as it enters into force, my delegation believes that discussions should be held without delay on fissile material that has already been produced. This will require flexibility on all sides, which, as we have already said, is possible under the Shannon mandate and the Conference's rules of procedure.

In our view, the creation of a framework for an internationally and effectively verifiable FMCT — to borrow the terminology of the Shannon mandate — is the greatest challenge facing future negotiators. We should not put off responding to this challenge until the conclusion of a future protocol but should instead include it in the body of the treaty. The current verification regime for non-nuclear-weapon States provides a valid reference point, though it should be tailored to the specific characteristics of the FMCT.

My delegation believes that the International Atomic Energy Agency should take on this new task, given its experience in the field of verification.

Lastly, my delegation is in favour of an FMCT that remains in force indefinitely. Clauses on its entry into force should promote the inclusion of all relevant stakeholders, but the non-accession of a minority to the treaty should not under any circumstances impede its entry into force. Apart from this, we are in favour of a limited renunciation mechanism that would require the renouncing State to explain its reasons for taking such an extreme measure and would give the other States parties enough time to react properly.

I will conclude by mentioning the group of governmental experts on an FMCT, which will begin meeting in Geneva in 2014. This forum will provide a new opportunity to compare ideas on the subject that we are addressing — or, rather, should be addressing — in the Conference on Disarmament. Some view this initiative as an encroachment on the Conference's monopoly over negotiations. In my delegation's view, what really threatens the Conference — and not just its negotiating authority but its very survival — is the paralysis that has dragged on for longer than could possibly be considered reasonable.

Rest assured, Madam President, that the Spanish delegation will strongly support any effort or initiative that might help the Conference resume negotiation of multilateral instruments – and the group of experts could help us reach that objective.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Spain for his statement and his kind words. I now give the floor to the representative of Canada.

Ms. Golberg (Canada): Madam President, Canada's efforts to commence negotiations in this body on a treaty banning the production of fissile material are well known. We feel strongly that such a treaty would represent a meaningful contribution to both nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament efforts. It would also respond to the obligation held by the 189 States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear

Weapons (NPT), and by most in this room, to implement action 15 of the 2010 NPT action plan as well as to implement the decisions taken by United Nations Member States during the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

Canada has outlined its substantive views on a treaty on many occasions, notably twice in this Conference last year, including our call for this body to initiate negotiations on an urgent basis. We have put forward numerous proposals to address concrete elements of a treaty, including options to address both scope and verification. We intend to build upon these proposals this year as we respond to the Secretary-General's call for Member States' views on aspects of a treaty. There is no doubt that the issues involved are complex. Negotiations will therefore not be easy and will require compromise and flexibility on all sides. As such, it is unfortunate that we cannot even demonstrate the flexibility to allow negotiations to begin. For it is only through negotiation that these issues, including on the scope, will be resolved. As the representative of Spain has just noted, and as the representative of Nigeria also eloquently commented two weeks ago, the use of the consensus role in the Conference on Disarmament has drifted away from its original intent – to protect a State's national security interests in negotiation. An all-or-nothing approach to negotiations only ensures that this body remains deadlocked, and prevents real progress on multilateral non-proliferation and disarmament.

Canada facilitated the negotiations of General Assembly resolution 67/53 of 3 December 2012, which was adopted with the broad support of 166 United Nations Member States. This resolution represents a shared commitment to advance work towards the eventual negotiation of a treaty to ban the production of fissile material used for nuclear weapons and other explosive devices.

The resolution offers a modest but pragmatic approach to addressing calls by the General Assembly and from many members of the Conference on Disarmament to consider options to advance negotiation of a treaty. The resolution created a group of governmental experts which will begin work in 2014. The group would make recommendations on possible aspects which could contribute to an eventual treaty. Considerable effort was made in the resolution to respect the role of the Conference. The group will not negotiate a treaty. This has never been, nor should it be, the role of a group of governmental experts. It will instead enable a focused and substantive discussion among experts who can meaningfully take forward the substance of the issue, and whose report can potentially serve as a reference document for eventual negotiations.

Canada hopes that the group of governmental experts will be able to benefit from a strong and comprehensive report by the United Nations Secretary-General conveying the views of Member States on a treaty, including possible aspects for inclusion therein. I would draw the attention of all to the note verbale issued by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs on 31 January, calling for the submission of Member States' views by 15 May. We hope that Member States will respond to this request and use this opportunity to ensure that their voices are heard on this most important issue. The combined efforts of the international community in this process will be essential to make a meaningful contribution to both disarmament and non-proliferation efforts.

The group of governmental experts is not a substitute for negotiation in the Conference on Disarmament, but, in light of the fact that the Conference continues to be prevented from adopting a programme of work, it offers an opportunity for concrete progress which the Conference on Disarmament can then subsequently leverage. It is our shared obligation to take advantage of this opportunity, and we sincerely hope that we will be in a position to do so effectively.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Canada for her statement. I now give the floor to the representative of the United States of America.

Ms. Kennedy (United States of America): Thank you, Madam President, for the opportunity to address this plenary on the subject of a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). The negotiation of an FMCT has been an issue at the core of the Conference's agenda for many years. It is a central tenet of President Obama's Prague vision of a world without nuclear weapons, part of the step-by-step mutually reinforcing process we believe necessary to get to that world. Many times the international community has underlined the centrality of an FMCT to nuclear disarmament. The international community has long been ready to negotiate an FMCT. For no other nuclear disarmament measure has the technical and conceptual groundwork been prepared better than it has for an FMCT. The 2010 NPT Review Conference action plan, to note but one such reaffirmation, underscores again the high priority of achieving an FMCT as a logical and essential next step on the path towards global nuclear disarmament. We much prefer that the FMCT issue be dealt with here in the Conference, a well-established venue for negotiations that includes every major nuclear-capable State and operates by consensus.

But, while there are no technical or conceptual obstacles to the commencement of FMCT negotiations, there are political ones. As you are well aware, these are self-inflicted. A programme of work including FMCT negotiations, contained in document CD/1864, was approved by the Conference in the spring of 2009, and would have set things in motion. Since then, however, negotiations on an FMCT in the Conference have been blocked, and the will of the international community has been repeatedly thwarted. Efforts by several Conference members to craft sensible compromise language have all failed, including two promising recent programme of work proposals offered by the representatives of Egypt and Hungary, respectively, and an earlier effort by the representative of Brazil, when he presided over the Conference. The deadlock in the Conference over the FMCT issue appears as intractable today as it ever has been, although it need not be.

Years of frustration and inactivity led to a predictable result, with the First Committee of the General Assembly taking action at its 2012 session. While not enthusiastic about increasing General Assembly involvement in Conference-related issues, the United States of America assessed that the Canadian-sponsored FMCT resolution — and I note the good words of our colleague from Canada on this issue — establishing a group of governmental experts was balanced and consensus-based, and could lead to future FMCT negotiations in the Conference. This is why in the end we decided to support the Canadian resolution, and why we encouraged others to support its work. It's not a substitute for the Conference, as Ambassador Golberg said again today. It's an impetus for the Conference to regain lost credibility by returning to the role carved out for it as a forum for multilateral disarmament negotiations. We intend to actively participate in the group of governmental experts, if invited, and we will encourage other countries that would be directly affected by an FMCT to do the same. We will, of course, provide views by 15 May, as requested by the Secretary-General, and hope all other States will do so as well.

My delegation has already outlined our substantive views on an FMCT in past plenaries, and in other meetings held over the past two years on the margins of the Conference. The United States shares the international goal of a non-discriminatory treaty that halts the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, and that is internationally verifiable. An FMCT would be an important international achievement, both for non-proliferation and for disarmament. It would effectively cap the fissile materials available for use in nuclear weapons. If it were put alongside the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, measures that constrain the technological sophistication of a country's nuclear arsenal, and its size, would be in place. An FMCT would also fold additional enrichment and reprocessing facilities into the international monitoring regime of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. It would help consolidate the advances in arms control since the end of the cold war, and provide the basis for further, deeper reductions in nuclear arsenals globally.

Consistent with the Shannon mandate, the ultimate scope of the treaty will be an issue for negotiations. The United States position on the scope of an FMCT is well known. It is that FMCT obligations, including verification obligations, should cover new production of fissile material. Existing stockpiles would be dealt with separately, through other agreements and voluntary measures. We have already undertaken such agreements with Russia, and have taken unilateral steps in addition. In 1994, the United States removed 174 metric tons of highly enriched uranium from its weapons programme. In 2005, the United States announced that an additional 200 metric tons would be removed, which would be enough for more than 11,000 nuclear weapons. In an arrangement with Russia, 472 metric tons of Russian highly enriched uranium have now been down-blended for use as commercial reactor fuel, and that number is expected to reach the 500-metric-ton target of this year. In addition, more than 60 metric tons of plutonium were removed from United States defence stocks, of which 34 metric tons were included in the Plutonium Management and Disposition Agreement between the United States of America and the Russian Federation. That agreement commits each country to disposing of at least 34 metric tons of excess weapons-grade plutonium, enough in total for approximately 17,000 nuclear weapons. Disposition will be subject to IAEA monitoring and will transform the material into forms that cannot be used for nuclear weapons.

President Obama has accompanied this steady drawdown of fissile material stocks with an accelerated focus on securing fissile material worldwide – a high-level, international focus which was initiated at the Nuclear Security Summit in 2010, followed by the Seoul Summit in 2012. Of course we very much look forward to the next summit, to be held at the Hague.

In short, the United States and Russia, the two countries with the largest fissile material stocks, have been reducing their stockpiles over the course of many years, and more specifically in the 18 years since the Shannon mandate. The old debate over FMCT scope in the Conference is behind the curve in this regard. Attempts to address existing stocks multilaterally and link them to a ban on new production for weapons purposes will only complicate consensus on beginning a negotiation on an FMCT. We know that and have chosen to address stocks by other means. Furthermore, the longer production is not banned, the more stocks will accrue in countries which, unlike the United States, have not imposed a moratorium on production.

All of this said, we are well aware that others have a differing view on the scope issue. That is what negotiations are for. It is not possible to resolve such difficult issues before negotiations even begin. Efforts to do so seem to have the effect, whether by design or inadvertently, of preventing negotiations.

Like others here today, we have begun the 2013 session of the Conference with renewed commitment to the negotiation of an FMCT, despite the stagnation of this body these last many years. Negotiations in the Conference would neither discount nor override the national security concerns of any member; on the contrary, the security interests of all are assured by consensus in the Conference. Of course, our deliberations here today, no matter how substantive, are not a substitute for negotiations. The Conference should take this important step in multilateral nuclear disarmament and initiate FMCT negotiations as soon as possible. We are certainly ready to launch them.

Let me close by referring to the issue I discussed in a previous plenary, that is, that we share the same commitment and passion for a world without nuclear weapons with other like-minded States and our colleagues in civil society. We may have different views of the path towards achieving that world, but let us not lose sight of the fact that we are partners. Today I would like to thank Reaching Critical Will, in particular for their work documenting our deliberations here, and the Women's International League for Peace and

Freedom and Ms. Fihn for her statement, which, I must say, as a committed feminist I particularly appreciated.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of the United States of America for her statement, and may I say I join her in her last comment. I now give the floor to the representative of Hungary.

Mr. Dékány (Hungary): Madam President, let me first congratulate you on the skilful and honest manner in which you have been steering our work and express our sincere appreciation for your efforts to continue to find a way for the Conference on Disarmament to resume its substantive work in the near future. I think you have done everything humanly possible under the present circumstances.

Hungary fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union.

The Government of Hungary remains fully committed to the process of nuclear disarmament and, as a first step thereof, to the establishment of a legally binding treaty banning the production of fissile materials for weapons purposes (FMCT). Besides political support for the early start of treaty negotiations, we are ready and able to contribute to the necessary technical discussions as well, as was demonstrated by the active participation of an expert of the Hungarian Atomic Energy Authority in the experts' side event on FMCT definitions organized by Australia and Japan in February 2011.

Last week we heard a number of statements on the importance of nuclear disarmament, considered by many member States as their top priority. In our view, the elimination of nuclear weapons is not a single act, but rather a step-by-step process, as foreseen by the founding fathers of the Conference in the outcome document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Hungary is convinced that at this juncture banning the production of fissionable materials for weapons purposes is indeed the long overdue next logical step in this process. The proposal to start negotiations of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices has been an integral part of the considerations on the Conference's programme of work since the elaboration of the Shannon mandate of 1995, and is contained in the last programme of work adopted by consensus, in document CD/1864.

The priority given to the commencement of FMCT negotiations has been reaffirmed by important decisions and documents of different multilateral forums. Just a few months after the adoption of the programme of work contained in document CD/1864, the United Nations Security Council, at a high-level session chaired by the President of the United States, adopted resolution 1887 (2009), which, in its operative paragraph 8, calls upon the Conference on Disarmament to negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices as soon as possible. Furthermore, action 15 of the 2010 NPT action plan, adopted by consensus, urges the Conference on Disarmament to immediately begin negotiation of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices in accordance with the Shannon report of 1995 (CD/1299) and the mandate contained therein, providing the only negotiation mandate in the 2010 NPT action plan. The General Assembly has also repeated earlier calls for starting negotiations on an FMCT; General Assembly resolution 67/53 of 3 December 2012 on a treaty banning the production of fissile material urges the Conference on Disarmament to agree on and implement in early 2013 a balanced and comprehensive programme of work that includes the immediate commencement of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices on the basis of document CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein. The same resolution urges the Secretary-General to establish a group of governmental experts, which is due to convene next year. This clearly indicates the frustration of the majority of Member States over the long delay of FMCT negotiations in

the Conference on Disarmament. We hope that the work of the experts will give the FMCT process the necessary impetus it has lacked for so long.

The potential of an FMCT to safeguard and increase international security is, in our view, convincing enough not to delay negotiations anymore. By banning and verifying the production of fissile materials, an FMCT would contribute to the implementation of article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and by limiting the amount of direct-use materials that may be accessible to non-State actors for building improvised nuclear explosive devices it could also significantly limit the opportunities for nuclear terrorist acts.

The Conference on Disarmament, with its unique set-up and modalities, is the right place to start our work. We encourage the incoming Conference presidents to continue to consult on this issue.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Hungary for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Switzerland.

Mr. Schmid (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Madam President, allow me first of all to thank you for giving us the opportunity to consider the topic of a multilateral treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

Switzerland has already emphasized on many occasions the importance it attaches to the early start of negotiations on such a treaty. This position is based on our conviction that the international nuclear non-proliferation regime, which at this stage essentially consists of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, would be considerably strengthened by the adoption of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.

We trust that the vast majority of Conference members share these views, but we would also like to point out that this objective is shared by others far beyond this inner circle. Thus, the States parties to the NPT have set for us a clear goal in this regard, both in the final document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference and in that of the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

A treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons would offer many benefits. Existing voluntary moratoriums on the production of fissile material would become permanent and legally binding obligations, while nuclear-weapon States that have not declared such moratoriums would be required to cease production of fissile material for military purposes. Moreover, the adoption of such a treaty would make the system more inclusive by bringing together under a common framework States parties to the NPT and States not parties to that instrument. Last but not least, such a treaty would constitute a key step towards eliminating the dangers posed by nuclear weapons.

In order to ensure that all these anticipated effects truly materialize, it is clear, in our view, that a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons must meet certain criteria. As is noted in the mandate set out in document CD/1299, also known as the Shannon mandate, such a treaty must be multilateral, non-discriminatory and effectively verifiable. It is equally imperative that it cover not only the future production of fissile material but also existing stocks.

This last point is essential for several reasons.

An approach focusing only on non-proliferation would make it impossible to tackle several of the challenges facing us. Moreover, such an approach would likely fail to receive the necessary support, which would severely limit the usefulness of the resulting instrument. Lastly, the approach adopted regarding fissile material stocks will demonstrate

the extent to which there is real will among all nuclear-weapon States to make progress towards disarmament.

A treaty covering both future production and existing stocks would not only contribute to non-proliferation efforts but also represent a very concrete step towards nuclear disarmament. Thus, a fissile material cut-off treaty should provide for the reduction and successive elimination of existing stocks of fissile material. Such provisions would give substance to the various obligations and commitments in the field of nuclear disarmament and the promises of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Reducing stocks of fissile material for nuclear devices is also essential, given their extent. There are huge reserves of highly enriched plutonium and uranium amounting to several hundred tons – enough to produce tens of thousands of nuclear warheads. For this reason, a treaty that does not cover fissile material stocks not only would not contribute to nuclear disarmament but would also be unable to prevent a new nuclear arms race. It would therefore not comply with the principle of irreversibility that the States parties to the NPT agreed to apply in their nuclear disarmament efforts.

Resolution 67/53 of 3 December 2012, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session, on the issue of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, calls for new procedures and mechanisms to be established so as to make headway on this issue. In its resolution the General Assembly, noting the stalemate in the Conference, requested the Secretary-General of the United Nations to seek the views of Member States on the subject by its sixty-eighth session and asked that a group of governmental experts representing 25 Member States meet in 2014 and 2015 in Geneva to develop recommendations on aspects that could contribute to the negotiation of such a treaty.

Switzerland supported the resolution, as it believes that the proposed approach could contribute to the implementation of the action plan agreed on at the 2010 NPT Review Conference and could benefit the Conference. The new process does not call into question, but rather supports, the objectives set concerning a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. Similarly, the establishment of an open-ended working group on nuclear disarmament does not call into question the 2010 NPT action plan or the other objectives established in the field of nuclear disarmament, but rather provides a framework to promote their implementation.

While Switzerland supported resolution 67/53, we believe it is crucial that the group of governmental experts be fully aware of the views of all States in its work, particularly on the issue of including provisions on stocks in any fissile material cut-off treaty. For this reason, the geographical distribution of the States that participate in the group of governmental experts is particularly important. It is equally important that Member States, and especially non-nuclear-weapon States, communicate their views on the matter to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Switzerland will certainly respond to the Secretary-General's request and encourages all States to do likewise.

(spoke in English)

Madam President, I obviously cannot count myself a dedicated feminist, but nevertheless I would like to close by joining in the congratulatory and supporting statements that have been made with regard to the important role of women in disarmament.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Switzerland for his remarks and for his kind words, and I think I speak on behalf of my colleague from the United States in saying that we would be happy to welcome him to our midst as a dedicated feminist. I now give the floor to the representative of Italy.

Mr. Risi (Italy): Madam President, I would like to express my appreciation for the way you have been conducting your duties.

We of course support the statement by the European Union, but there are some issues we would like to recall from a national point of view.

A fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) is a priority for Italy within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament. The reason is that an FMCT is an instrument to foster disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.

Serious matters must be tackled during the negotiations of a successful FMCT, and not least among them is the issue of stockpiles. This matter should be dealt with during negotiations. It is not a precondition for them. In that way any State would be free to raise questions it considers priority national security concerns. Should the stalemate in the Conference continue, a valuable contribution to moving the process forward could come from General Assembly resolution 67/53 of 3 December 2012. We do not wish to engage further in the philosophy behind the FMCT, but we have in mind five points.

1. **Definitions.** Defining fissile materials is a complex issue but is essential in tackling the FMCT. In the past, at least three definitions have been tabled: by the United States of America, by the Russian Federation and by Switzerland. A definition of fissile materials is contained in article XX of the statute of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). So there is scope for negotiation and for expert input from IAEA and other institutions specialized in inorganic chemistry and nuclear physics.

2. **Verification.** Provisions on verification are essential to any disarmament and non-proliferation treaty. Here also there is scope for negotiations and for input from experienced quarters, such as IAEA. More generally, the question of verification is one that has consequences and ramifications for the other four issues we mention in this statement.

3. **Nuclear fuel.** The navies of at least four nuclear-weapon States also use highly enriched fissile material as a fuel for naval vessels, and not just as explosives for their nuclear warheads. An FMCT negotiation will have to address this problem – to decide whether this fissile material, though comparable to nuclear explosives, should or should not be covered by the provisions of the treaty, and, if it is, how.

4. **Production plants.** We must address the problem of facilities producing weapons-grade fissile material. The question is: decommissioning or conversion? And is the conversion economically and technically feasible? And how do we regulate the matter of inspections of production plants?

5. **Stockpiles.** Stockpiles are the real stumbling block of any future negotiation on an FMCT, as has emerged during previous sessions of the Conference. Should the treaty be a simple cut-off, or should it also contain provisions on existing stockpiles, as we would in fact prefer? And, if yes, what kind of provisions? The views expressed so far have been radically different, but in our line of work nothing is ever black or white. Even simply reflecting on this question and thinking it through should provide us with clues on possible compromise solutions.

If in the Conference we have the possibility to conduct serious discussions on the five issues we have just mentioned and arrive at some provisional understandings regarding at least some of them, the outline of an FMCT will gradually appear, in spite of our not having formally begun to negotiate.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Italy for his remarks and for his kind words. I now give the floor to the representative of Germany.

Mr. Hoffmann (Germany): Madam President, my delegation associates itself with the statement made by the European Union. I wish to thank Ms. Beatrice Fihn for the

statement she made on behalf of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, and I do that as a dedicated disarmament supporter. It is important that we hear the voice of civil society in the Conference on Disarmament, an objective my delegation continues to support.

Madam President, I would like to thank you for the excellent manner in which you have presided over our work. In spite of the fact that yet another attempt at agreeing on a draft programme of work once again met with a clear and open rejection by only one delegation only a few weeks ago, you took it upon yourself to conduct an impressive series of informal consultations to find out whether other avenues might be possible. But, not surprisingly, as things stand, it transpired once again that all core issues on our agenda continue to remain blocked as far as the opening of negotiations is concerned. This state of affairs is particularly deplorable with respect to the long-time project of a treaty on fissile material for nuclear weapons purposes, since this is clearly the item on which nearly all sides are ready to start to work.

Before I elaborate on this further, most unfortunate recent developments make it necessary to first deal with an issue which Germany, as a member State of a forum which focuses on nuclear armaments issues, namely the Conference on Disarmament, attaches considerable importance to taking a stand on.

On 12 February my delegation condemned in the strongest possible terms the third nuclear test conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the early hours of that day. The statement went on to express the expectation that the international community must give a clear answer to this renewed provocation. Since then this chamber has seen repeated, extensive and even quite heated exchanges over this issue.

As a matter of principle, my delegation upholds with profound conviction the right of every delegation to argue the case it has to represent on behalf of its Government, no matter whether things are said which we see fundamentally differently or which at times we may even find objectionable. As Montaigne once observed, one needs very strong ears to hear oneself freely criticized. The international community needs this space of a free exchange of views because it is the indispensable precondition on the arduous road of hopefully reaching common understandings at some point in the future. The guarantee of a free space in this sense must, however, never be misunderstood as a licence to use intimidating language vis-à-vis others. My delegation therefore protested in no uncertain terms in the plenary meeting on 19 February when the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea considered by implication the "final destruction" of its neighbour to the south, a member of the Conference. In the meantime, the United Nations Security Council just a few days ago passed resolution 2094 of 7 March 2013, which I do not need to go into because it speaks for itself. However, it is a matter of utmost regret and indeed deeply disturbing that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, instead of reflecting soberly on what it means that yet another resolution was adopted in the United Nations Security Council unanimously condemning its proliferation activities, has, quite on the contrary, chosen to resort to an astounding language of threats vis-à-vis other members of the international community. Such language or threatening the use of force simply cannot be accepted or tolerated in today's world. The German Foreign Minister, Guido Westerwelle, has condemned the threats by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of a nuclear first strike in the strongest possible terms. He called on the leadership in Pyongyang not to aggravate the situation in the region further by irresponsible sabre-rattling, to stop the rhetoric of war and to terminate nuclear and missile tests by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

We certainly have no desire to contribute to an escalation in rhetoric regarding this most unfortunate matter. Quite the contrary, but we feel that it is imperative that the

international community take a very clear stand when States start to engage in such threatening language.

Madam President, let me now turn to the subject that you suggested we should discuss today, namely the subject of negotiations on fissile material for nuclear weapons purposes. Germany attaches much importance to a treaty which prohibits the production of such material and which is supported in particular by all States which have respective technical capabilities. One need not be an arms control expert to understand immediately why the conclusion of such a treaty is commonly referred to as “the next logical step” in nuclear disarmament, because after the arrangements of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty it would clearly be the obvious thing to do on the road to a world without nuclear weapons – a final destination which, as everyone who has sober judgement is aware, will require a very sustained long-term effort, so that intermediate steps like a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) would obviously lend themselves as a practical way forward. It is most unfortunate that in spite of very many efforts over decades it has proven impossible to this day to get negotiations going on such a treaty in a sustained manner in the Conference. In all these years there have been, and there continue to be, many reasons for that sorry state of affairs. One key factor, presumably the key factor, continues to be the contentious question of the scope of such negotiations. Some, and I believe it is fair to say that these are mostly the nuclear-weapon-possessing States, feel that such negotiations should deal only with future production of fissile material, whereas others are of the view that such negotiations would permit consideration not only of future but also of past production, and still others take the view that consideration should relate not only to production of fissile material, past or future, but also to other issues, such as the management of such material.

Madam President, I am confident you and colleagues will have realized immediately that I borrowed much of what I just said from a document that is often referred to, but I fear not so often actually read – the so-called Shannon mandate, which will be 18 years old in a few days’ time. This document was, of course, a subtly crafted and at the same time shaky compromise in that its conclusion was simply to state that delegations could raise their respective views in future negotiations on fissile material. I think it is fair to say that if, in all these years before and since the crafting of the Shannon mandate, a readiness had existed on all sides to state in a draft programme of work in a straightforward manner that negotiations would also address past production, the entire project could have developed much more productively. One would have left it to the negotiations proper to find out which course of action would turn out to be more plausible in terms of objective necessities and requirements. We, for one, feel that in order to arrive at a verifiable treaty, which appears as a *sine qua non* given what is at stake, and which appears now to be broadly accepted, at least on the face of it, a degree of transparency with regard to past production of fissile material for nuclear weapons purposes will be required. I think it is in order to state that a vast majority of States see this pretty much the same way.

Germany has over many years been a promoter of FMCT negotiations. We have always participated actively in discussions on the subject in the Conference. I would also refer to the seminar the Federal Foreign Office organized in Berlin in 2009, in which many Conference representatives participated. I would also refer to the two meetings of scientific experts we organized together with our Dutch friends in 2012. To the FMCT side events held by Australia and Japan in 2011, we contributed an experienced long-time expert in the field. And, finally, I would mention our contribution to a working paper introduced in the Conference in 2011 by Spain on behalf of eight member States, that is, document CD/1910 of 9 June.

We continue to take the view that efforts to start work in the Conference on a treaty dealing with fissile material for nuclear weapons purposes must continue. We regard the

establishment of a group of governmental experts dealing with the subject at hand as an instrument which can either help to get such negotiations going in the Conference or at a minimum be a useful tool which can make recommendations on possible elements that could contribute to a future treaty and aspects thereof. In a sense, it is of course deplorable that the General Assembly had to resort to that route to advance this cause, but under the circumstances it is an option which one could not fail to pursue.

Madam President, Germany and my delegation remain ready to make their contribution.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Germany for his statement and for his kind words. I now give the floor to the representative of Australia.

Ms. Abbott (Australia): Madam President, it will be an important and welcome series of achievements when we begin negotiating, then conclude and finally bring into force a treaty banning the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices in accordance with the Shannon report of 1995 (CD/1299) and the mandate contained therein. The conclusion of such a treaty will not be an end in itself; our work will need to continue. But a treaty banning the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices will be a significant step in irreversible nuclear disarmament and a milestone towards our shared destination of a world without nuclear weapons. It is, of course, a matter of long-standing record that Australia supports the immediate commencement of work on such a treaty. Since 2010, Australia has circulated in the Conference documents CD/1895, CD/1896, CD/1906, CD/1909 and CD/1919. All demonstrate Australia's substantive and practical support for this proposed instrument, an instrument whose origins date back to 1946 and which paragraph 50 of the final document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament cited as one of the agreements whose urgent negotiation at appropriate stages and with adequate verification measures was required to achieve nuclear disarmament.

Madam President, I will not seek to summarize the views contained in the various documents Australia has recently circulated in the Conference on this issue. However, I would like to take this opportunity to restate why a treaty banning the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices remains important to Australia. Such a treaty has the potential to deliver substantial security benefits, furthering the twin goals of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

By capping the amount of fissile material available for weapons use, such a treaty would be an utterly essential step towards irreversible nuclear disarmament. It would also further tighten controls on fissile material. And, by imposing a quantitative limit on the amount of fissile material available for weapons use, it would complement the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which impedes development of nuclear weapons. The polemics which have surrounded this proposed treaty continue to be a source of profound regret. No member State of the Conference genuinely espousing the twin goals of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation has questioned the necessity of controlling fissile material for weapons purposes.

In this regard, it is important to emphasize again that Australia does not consider a treaty banning the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices to be an end in itself. After the conclusion and entry into force of the treaty, the work to achieve a world without nuclear weapons will continue. I would also like to emphasize that Australia does not believe that the issue of past production of fissile material, which is a legitimate question, should be an impediment to negotiations. Indeed, it is regrettable that there has been a narrative that that issue is the impediment to negotiations. Australia has not subscribed to this narrative. Australia remains of the view that the Shannon mandate, contained in document CD/1299, carefully sets out the

parameters for the discussion on scope which will need to occur in negotiations and would allow the widest possible range of actors to come, sit and talk at the negotiation table. And even before we take that step along a much longer road, the establishment and maintenance of moratoriums on the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices remain vital.

Production moratoriums cannot substitute for legally binding, irreversible and effectively verifiable commitments through a treaty. Nevertheless, existing production moratoriums and, for that matter, efforts relating to facility dismantlement and fissile material disposition do build confidence and send clear signals about the need to move beyond production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. It is welcome that there are nuclear-weapon States which have declared their implementation of production moratoriums. At the same time, regrettably, there are still States yet to indicate that they are not producing fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. And it is even more regrettable that production of such fissile material in some cases actually continues.

Finally, Madam President, I wish again to put on record Australia's strong support for the establishment of a group of governmental experts to consider this question in 2014 and 2015 in accordance with General Assembly resolution 67/53 of 3 December 2012, and also its strong interest in that group's work. This will be an opportunity to take an important issue forward. But even if our field of vision is narrower and focused just on the Conference of Disarmament, we should still all be viewing the group of governmental experts as what it can be – an opportunity to inform, guide and thereby support this once dynamic but now bleak house.

The President: I thank the representative of Australia for her statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Japan.

Mr. Amano (Japan): Madam President, last Tuesday, I stated that a cumulative process of practical steps and concrete disarmament measures is the appropriate approach to advancing towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Japan considers a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other explosive devices (FMCT) as the next logical step in that process. Today, I would like to further develop my thinking on this issue, which is broadly considered by the international community as the most mature instrument to be negotiated. Since there are many different aspects that make up an FMCT, I will summarize our basic position on the four major ones.

First, regarding core obligations, there is a consensus that a ban on the future production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or nuclear explosive devices would be the core obligation of an FMCT. As a logical consequence of a ban on future production, the entry into force of an FMCT would obligate the States possessing fissile material production facilities for nuclear-weapon purposes to close down or decommission those facilities, or convert them to non-nuclear-weapon purposes. Any reversion of such facilities to nuclear-weapon use, or the reversion of fissile materials that States have voluntarily declared as excess for national security needs, should be banned. Similarly, the diversion of existing and future stocks of fissile material for non-nuclear-weapon purposes to weapon purposes should be banned too. Furthermore, transfers and assistance to another State in connection with the production of fissile material for nuclear-weapon purposes should also be subject to prohibition.

Second, regarding definitions, bearing in mind the intent and purposes of an FMCT, we have to make sure that no legal loopholes are created by inadvertently choosing narrow definitions. We thus believe that article XX of the International Atomic Energy Agency statute, on special fissionable materials, could provide a basis for a definition of fissile material and would not adversely affect the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Third, regarding verification, we believe there are four possible categories that need to be taken into consideration. These categories of verification would confirm, first, that the amount of fissile material stock for nuclear weapons has not increased since the date of the treaty's entry into force; second, that the reactors and facilities for the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or nuclear explosive devices that are closed down, decommissioned or converted to non-nuclear-weapon uses remain in this state; third, that fissile material that has voluntarily been declared as excess as a result of nuclear disarmament is not converted back to nuclear-weapon purposes; and, fourth, that fissile material for non-nuclear-weapon purposes has not been diverted to nuclear weapons.

Fourth, as far as stocks are concerned, we recognize that an FMCT should at least prohibit (1) the transfer of stocks for nuclear weapons to a third country; (2) the diversion to nuclear-weapon purposes of stocks for conventional military use; and (3) the reversion to nuclear-weapon purposes of stocks declared as excess.

I know that on these important issues, particularly the treatment of stocks, there are divergent views among the members. Regardless of that, these issues can be resolved within the negotiations based on the Shannon mandate, which has already been agreed to by a majority of member States. Japan intends to push forward its position in negotiations once they begin.

Madam President, before concluding my intervention, allow me to refer to the Canadian resolution adopted at the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly. A group of governmental experts on an FMCT will be established, and it will commence its work next year. Japan earnestly hopes it will provide new momentum and help the Conference to begin its substantive work. Notwithstanding this, it is necessary for us to acknowledge that the Conference has failed for many years to start FMCT negotiations, despite wide support for their commencement. If the Conference continues to be unsuccessful in responding to the voice of the international community, the *raison d'être* of this body as the single multilateral disarmament forum will be called further into question, and it will only accelerate attempts to divert it. From this perspective, I would like to stress to all the members of the Conference the necessity of overcoming the present state of affairs as soon as possible. At the same time, pending the commencement of negotiations, Japan urges all States possessing nuclear weapons to declare and maintain a moratorium on the production of fissile materials for nuclear-weapon purposes. It will strengthen momentum towards the establishment of the treaty.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Japan for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of the Netherlands.

Mr. van den IJssel (Netherlands): Madam President, let me start by thanking Ms. Fihn for her statement and the fact that she made the effort to address this body. I also would like to express my sincere appreciation to you, Madam President, for the active way in which you are conducting your presidency. Your consultations with all of us are highly appreciated, as is the way in which you actively try to seek common ground to find a way forward. We commend you for that.

If you allow me, I will now turn to the topic of today, the fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). Before I go into the Dutch position, let me say that I fully align myself with the statement that was delivered earlier on behalf of the European Union.

Let me start by emphasizing that our discussions on an FMCT and the other core issues cannot, of course, substitute for the work we should be conducting in the Conference, namely the start of real negotiations on this topic. We deeply regret that the Conference on Disarmament has not been the forum for negotiations on an FMCT or for any other topic for the last 16 years. Let me stress again that, like many other delegations in this room, we

stand ready to immediately commence such negotiations, and that we are flexible as to the wording of an enabling mandate.

Madam President, you and the delegates in this room are well aware of the importance we, the Netherlands, attach to concluding a verifiable FMCT. We see such a treaty as an indispensable step towards a world free of nuclear weapons.

As progress in the Conference on an FMCT seems to be a bridge too far for the moment, we are satisfied that resolution 67/53 of 3 December 2012 on the establishment of a group of governmental experts was adopted with such a large majority by the General Assembly, and we sincerely hope that the work of the group can indeed help to bring the start and conclusion of real negotiations on an FMCT closer. Let me assure you that the Netherlands is strongly committed to helping in whatever way it can to bring about a successful outcome for the group of governmental experts. That is why today I would also like to share some preliminary thoughts and ideas we have for reaching such a successful outcome.

In our view the group of governmental experts should focus on finding common ground. We are not starting from scratch, of course. A lot of work has been done in the past years, including a number of events in the margins of the Conference on Disarmament. What are the elements on which we can more easily reach consensus? But we should also explore if compromises are possible on the more difficult parts, like stocks or the contents of the verification provisions. In short, we should not shy away from putting everything on the table and seeing where progress is possible.

The outcome of the work of the group of governmental experts could be a report to the Secretary-General and the Conference on Disarmament which contains an overview of issues where agreement may be within reach and what the more challenging items are. Maybe we could also include some thoughts on possible ways to overcome the existing differences. For example, should we strive for an integral approach, one treaty dealing with all the elements, or should we also look into the possibility of working towards a main or core treaty with separate protocols on issues like stocks?

Another question is how to continue after the group of governmental experts. It is clear that this will first be up to the General Assembly and the Conference on Disarmament, to which these issues will be referred back. Much will also depend, of course, on the outcomes of the work of the group of governmental experts. Questions facing us are: Will the issue then be completely left to the Conference on Disarmament again, or do we see added value in a role for the General Assembly? If the latter, what could that role be?

To sum up, in the absence of agreement within the Conference, we see the group of governmental experts as the way forward towards the start of negotiations on an FMCT. The Netherlands is committed to making this group a success. The group should explore all issues to see where progress is possible, and should discuss possible ways forward on the more difficult ones. It will not be easy, but we sincerely hope that the group of governmental experts can bring us the necessary oil to get the negotiations on fissile material started and thereby get the rusted disarmament machinery going again.

As a final word, Madam President, my German colleague made some remarks about the use of threats and intimidation against other States being unacceptable. I will not make any further comments on this issue here, but let me just say that we fully associate ourselves with these remarks made by Germany.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of the Netherlands for his statement and for his kind words. I now give the floor to the representative of France.

Mr. Simon-Michel (France) (*spoke in French*): Madam President, I fully support the statement just made on behalf of the European Union.

I already emphasized last week the importance that my country attaches to the immediate start of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, which is the topic of our discussion today.

It is a matter of fulfilling our international obligations under Security Council resolution 1887 (2009), General Assembly resolution 67/53 of 3 December 2012 and, for the vast majority of us, action 15 in the 2010 NPT Review Conference action plan. It is a matter of making progress in the implementation of article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The conclusion of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons is the next logical step in nuclear disarmament. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty made it possible to halt the qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons. A treaty on the production of fissile material will make it possible to limit the quantity of such weapons by banning the production of fissile material, which is the raw material used to make nuclear weapons. Therefore it will indeed be a disarmament treaty, though it will also help to combat proliferation.

This is the only way of making progress in multilateral nuclear disarmament. It is the key to a realistic, practical, step-by-step approach to nuclear disarmament, which is at the heart of the action plan agreed on by consensus at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, and also at the heart of document CD/1864, which was the last programme of work adopted by the Conference, in 2009, and which, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 67/72 of December 2012, remains our point of reference.

Fissile material is the raw material for weapons. Starting from this logical basis, we should think about the issue primarily in terms of disarmament, adopting approaches that tackle the problem at the source, as these are easier to design than weapons-focused approaches.

Our reflections have reached the point where it is time to begin negotiations. The issue of prohibiting the production of fissile material has been on the table for quite some time. The discussions held in the Conference since the early 1990s have enabled us to deepen our reflection. Ever since the Shannon report was issued in 1995, we have held a mandate that refers to such negotiations.

Since the adoption of document CD/1864, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research seminar held in 2010, the side events organized by Australia and Japan in 2011 and the meetings of scientific experts organized by Germany and the Netherlands in 2012 have all provided opportunities for in-depth, high-quality exchanges. We must now continue to move forward.

Of the four core issues, no other has raised such expectations or been the subject of such enriching preliminary exchanges.

Of course, many issues are still the subject of some debate. These issues are complex and will need to be resolved through negotiation. Neither discussions on the adoption of a programme of work nor meetings of experts can replace the work of negotiation.

I would like to highlight a few of these issues.

First, with regard to the scope of the treaty, there is, for example, the key issue of the definition of fissile material. What types of uranium or plutonium should the definition include?

The activities covered by the term “production” in the phrase “production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and related facilities” must also be identified.

The issue of verification is closely linked to these problems of definition and scope. It has been the subject of many discussions, particularly during the side event organized by Japan two years ago. The issue must be addressed in a realistic spirit, taking into account effectiveness, non-proliferation obligations and defence concerns, and, of course, financial costs, which must be economically feasible. This issue leads to others, including the issues of which authority is responsible for verification and how to take into account the monitoring already conducted at the regional level, such as that carried out by the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) in my country.

These are complex questions. They are sensitive from both a military and economic viewpoint, because monitoring will affect industry. These issues are not insurmountable, however. It is possible to have credible and realistic verification mechanisms.

Lastly, the conditions for the entry into force of the future treaty will also need to be discussed.

France has long emphasized the fact that concrete actions and commitments speak louder than words when it comes to disarmament. France has an unparalleled track record and depth of experience in the area we are discussing today. Without waiting for the start of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, France has already stopped producing such material. Moreover, France has dismantled its production facilities. These are unmatched, irreversible measures, as are the accompanying transparency measures. Our colleagues in the Conference were invited to visit the former Pierrelatte and Marcoule facilities while they were still being dismantled at a cost of 6 billion euros. So when I hear people say that this is not disarmament but non-proliferation, I wonder what those 6 billion euros were for.

We call on all States that have not already done so to place a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.

But the time for reflection is over; let us now come straight to the point.

At the most recent session of the United Nations General Assembly, France supported resolution 67/53, which establishes a group of governmental experts tasked not with negotiating a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices but with making recommendations on aspects that could contribute to such a treaty. This resolution is fully consistent with the road map laid out in the NPT Review Conference action plan and with the step-by-step approach to disarmament promoted in the road map. The group of governmental experts will allow us to move forward while still preserving the competence of the Conference, whose sole purpose, in our view, is to lead these negotiations.

The time has come to act. The group of governmental experts is a useful body, and we intend to participate actively in it and will, of course, submit a very substantial report by 15 May to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. However, in our view it would of course be vastly preferable for the Conference to decide right now to immediately commence negotiations, as resolution 67/53, paragraph 1, urges it to do.

The President: I thank the representative of France for his statement and for his kind words. I now give the floor to the representative of Kazakhstan.

Mr. Tileuberdi (Kazakhstan): Madam President, at the outset, I would like to express our appreciation for your active endeavours as the President of the Conference on Disarmament and for the manner in which you are steering the work of the Conference. Once again, I assure you of our full support and cooperation in implementing your mandate. We are confident that the openness and inclusiveness of discussions that you competently promote during your term will contribute to launching the Conference's substantive work. Like my other colleagues, I also welcome the participation of the

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom in this plenary meeting, and their statement. That shows an enhancement of the Conference's interaction with civil society.

Negotiating a comprehensive, universal and legally binding treaty banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices on the basis of a balanced programme of work will serve the ultimate goal of the eventual elimination of weapons of mass destruction. Kazakhstan is committed to the banning of fissile materials production for nuclear weapons and paving the way for their total elimination.

As the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community, the Conference on Disarmament has to be in the vanguard of this long-overdue process. We are convinced that member States of the Conference still have an opportunity to create momentum and finally meet the expectations of the world community. From our perspective, the Shannon mandate is a good launching pad for future talks on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). We also remain open to discussing any other options or ideas that might help us to reach consensus.

Pending the entry into force of an FMCT, all stockpiles should be declared and all States should maintain a moratorium on production of fissile materials designed for nuclear weapons.

Our progress on this core issue will greatly enhance the security of the entire international community and complement the regimes of both the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban-Treaty.

Let me also thank the delegations of Germany and the Netherlands for their energetic efforts and dedication to create positive impact for the advancement of today's topic. Two technical experts' meetings on the FMCT issue, initiated by these delegations in May and August of last year, were very useful and have particular importance with regard to the negotiations within the Conference on Disarmament.

In the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly has made significant decisions, including the establishment of a group of governmental experts on FMCT next year.

Kazakhstan believes that the deliberations of the above-mentioned group of governmental experts will be aimed, first and foremost, at generating new suggestions for how to break the present stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament. We share the view of the Secretary-General of the Conference that our historical mission is to preserve the Conference for the sake of future generations. This forum has many historic achievements, and it is still full of potential for further meaningful work.

As a staunch supporter of the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation processes, Kazakhstan will participate in activities of the group of governmental experts to widely explore opportunities for an inclusive and multilateral dialogue within the Conference on Disarmament.

Since 1991, when Kazakhstan renounced its nuclear status, it has undertaken not to produce or acquire nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices and has accepted the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards for all its nuclear materials. We remain faithful to our international commitments.

Now that Kazakhstan is one of the world's biggest suppliers of uranium products, it stands ready to contribute to our common cause. Astana's talks with IAEA and its member States on establishing an international bank for low-enriched uranium under the auspices of IAEA and its safeguards at the Ulbi metallurgical plant in eastern Kazakhstan are advancing successfully. The Ulbi plant has more than 50 years of experience in the

effective operation of its low-enriched uranium bank and in the safe storage of nuclear materials. Also, Kazakhstan adheres to the global non-proliferation and disarmament processes, and the political stability and economic achievements of our country speak in favour of this decision.

We believe that this initiative will be another practical input to guarantee access by all States to nuclear fuel. At the same time, this is one more important step towards constraining the spread of nuclear weapons.

Madam President, let me express strong confidence that today's plenary meeting will be fruitful in terms of generating new approaches and ideas on such an extremely sensitive and important issue as an FMCT.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Kazakhstan for his statement and for his kind words. I now give the floor to the representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Ms. Adamson (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): Madam President, the United Kingdom associates itself with the speech delivered on behalf of the European Union.

I would like to join others in commanding the intervention by Beatrice Fihn of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), and to thank her and the rest of the League for their efforts not just here at the Conference but in many other areas. I had the privilege just yesterday of attending an event organized by WILPF about gender issues and the arms trade treaty. So, through Ms. Fihn, I would like to thank all the people who are working hard on all of these issues.

As I said last week, the United Kingdom remains absolutely committed to the long-term goal of a world without nuclear weapons. We have a strong record of fulfilling our disarmament commitments and of meeting the international legal obligations which flow from our membership in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as a nuclear-weapon State.

Sometimes when we are talking about the programme of work, I think we downplay the importance of a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). Let me briefly recall, as others have done, why it is so important.

Obtaining fissile material remains the greatest challenge to any new nuclear-weapon programme. For more than 50 years, this recognition has underpinned both support for and opposition to the adoption of a binding international treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. Such a treaty, if effectively verified, would put a ceiling on the total amount of fissile material available for weapons and thereby deliver a number of important benefits.

It would turn existing moratoriums on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices — the moratoriums announced by the United States of America, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and France — into legally binding commitments.

It would require such a commitment from States that have not announced such a moratorium.

It would ensure that verification arrangements were applied to all enrichment and reprocessing facilities in nuclear-weapon-possessing States and to any fissile material they produced for peaceful purposes.

It would, in the process, put in place an essential building block for an eventual global ban on nuclear weapons.

I talked last week about the importance of action to accompany words. The United Kingdom has already taken a number of practical steps in relation to fissile material.

As I just mentioned, the United Kingdom, along with the United States of America, the Russian Federation and France, has declared a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

In the past, the United Kingdom had produced highly enriched uranium and plutonium for weapons purposes. However, the United Kingdom announced in April 1995 that it had ceased the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. Accordingly, no such material has been produced since that date, though production of low-enriched uranium and separated plutonium for civil purposes has continued.

The United Kingdom has produced historical records of all its defence-related holdings of fissile material and has placed stocks surplus to defence requirements under international safeguards. In July 1998, the United Kingdom took the step of declaring the total size of the stocks of nuclear materials that it held outside international safeguards for national security purposes. At the same time, we announced that much of this stock was no longer required for defence purposes and that 4.4 metric tons of low-enriched uranium would be placed under European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) safeguards and made liable to inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

We have also ceased exercising our right, as a nuclear-weapon State, to withdraw fissile material from safeguarded stocks for nuclear weapons. Withdrawals are limited to small quantities of materials not suitable for weapon purposes, and the details are made public. No material withdrawn from safeguards is used in nuclear weapons.

Madam President, let me turn now to the current state of play regarding an FMCT here at the Conference. It is not enough for States such as the United Kingdom to take unilateral actions on fissile material. We must move forward together.

We believe that sustainable disarmament can be achieved only through a multilateral process. The negotiation of an FMCT in the Conference must remain a priority for the international community if we are to take forward our shared commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation, and to achieve our shared long-term goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

An FMCT, which should verifiably ban the future production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons and other explosive devices, must include all the nuclear players if it is to fulfil the ambition of the international community to strengthen the global disarmament and non-proliferation framework in a meaningful way.

With a verifiable treaty in place, we will be a significant step closer to our long-term goal of a world without nuclear weapons. Without an FMCT, we still have no legally binding way of putting a stop to the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons.

We therefore call on all Conference members to seek to engage in a constructive manner with their colleagues across the various groupings in an effort to find ways to build an understanding on the key issues and make progress towards a verifiable and internationally acceptable FMCT.

We congratulate Canada on its careful stewardship of the FMCT resolution last October, and we look forward to engaging within the context of the group of governmental experts. The call by the United Nations Secretary-General for views on that resolution is a good opportunity to set out clearly our detailed positions on an FMCT. I hope that we will

all take that opportunity. More than that, I hope that we can soon do more than discuss an FMCT right here in the Conference on Disarmament.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of the United Kingdom for her statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Cuba.

Ms. Fernández Palacios (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Madam President, we are facing a critical juncture in the work of the Conference. The issue of prohibiting fissile material is closely related to the paralysis afflicting the Conference, though it is by no means the primary cause. We note with concern the selective and politicized analysis of this issue, and the fact that it focuses mainly on the interests of Western countries. Cuba is in favour of starting negotiations in the Conference on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices that addresses the issue of stocks. We believe that the negotiation of a treaty on fissile material is a positive but insufficient measure if subsequent steps to bring about nuclear disarmament are not defined.

Such a treaty should represent a new step towards the goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons and must therefore contain not only non-proliferation measures but also nuclear disarmament measures.

Cuba is also prepared to negotiate in parallel in the Conference a treaty that eliminates and prohibits nuclear weapons, a treaty prohibiting an arms race in outer space and a treaty providing effective security assurances for States that, like Cuba, do not possess nuclear weapons. The Conference is capable of working in unison on these negotiations; what it lacks is the necessary political will to do so.

In my country's view, a treaty on this issue should prohibit the production of any fissile material suitable for military use and should provide for all stocks of fissile material to be declared and eliminated in an irreversible manner within an agreed time frame. It should also prohibit the future production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

Madam President, several States are currently seeking alternative ways of negotiating disarmament treaties. Our position in this regard is well known: Cuba will not support selective negotiations on particular issues. We wish to emphasize that the Conference is the sole multilateral body with negotiating authority. In the light of the urgent need to eliminate the threat to international security posed by nuclear weapons, we urge member States to make every effort to adopt and implement a comprehensive and balanced programme of work that takes into account the real priorities in the field of disarmament.

The President: I thank the representative of Cuba for her statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Ireland.

Mr. Jackson (Ireland): Madam President, first, let me express on behalf of my delegation our appreciation and admiration for the way in which you have been conducting our business during the four short weeks when you have been our President.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union this morning and would like to add the following additional national perspectives on this important topic on the Conference's agenda. As our Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade noted in his address to the Conference last month, there are many disarmament and non-proliferation challenges facing us today.

My delegation would also like to welcome the address on behalf of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom which was delivered this morning by Ms. Fihn. Ireland has long held that greater participation by civil society in the work of the Conference, as in other disarmament forums, can add significantly to our work.

Ireland has long held that the maintenance of a world free of nuclear weapons will require a framework of mutually reinforcing instruments. We are convinced that a fissile material treaty can and must serve both disarmament and non-proliferation purposes and, by doing so, would bring us closer to the goal of a world without nuclear weapons. As United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon noted on 18 January, the Conference should start long-overdue negotiations on a fissile material treaty as a matter of priority. The negotiation and conclusion of such a treaty would add to the record of this body and allow the Conference to regain its place at the heart of international disarmament.

In 2000, States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) agreed on 13 practical steps which highlighted the need for the Conference on Disarmament to negotiate a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. Regrettably, 13 years after those 13 steps were agreed on, the Conference has not been able to respond to that call.

In 2010, those States parties agreed that the Conference should immediately begin negotiation of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other explosive devices in accordance with the Shannon report of 1995 (CD/1299) and the mandate contained therein, as part of a balanced and comprehensive programme of work.

Last year, the General Assembly, by a very significant majority, voted for the creation in 2014 of a group of governmental experts to make recommendations on possible aspects which could contribute to such a treaty. In advance of the constitution of this group, the United Nations Secretary-General has been asked to collect the views of United Nations Member States on such a treaty and report those views to the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly as part of preparations for work on this important issue. Ireland urges all States to express their views to the Secretary-General and to remain involved in this process as it goes ahead.

Ireland believes that, to be meaningful, a fissile material treaty must address the disarmament agenda of the NPT as well as its non-proliferation agenda. It should, in our view, address existing stocks. This would serve to limit the expansion of existing nuclear arsenals while at the same time preventing the proliferation of new arsenals. A treaty along these lines would represent a major contribution to the total elimination of nuclear weapons, as envisaged by the NPT.

The President: I thank the representative of Ireland for his statement and for his kind words. I now give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Park Younghyo (Republic of Korea): Madam President, over the past years a variety of meaningful attempts to facilitate the launch of a formal negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) have been made within and on the margins of the Conference on Disarmament. My delegation firmly believes that initiating the negotiation of an FMCT is the next logical step towards a world without nuclear weapons.

During the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference, held last year, many States parties argued that the immediate commencement of an FMCT negotiation was required. If we indeed claim the authority of the Conference on Disarmament as the most appropriate negotiating forum for an FMCT, we should exercise more flexibility and political will by first beginning negotiation and then appropriately addressing relevant concerns in the course of the negotiations. As has been stated on numerous occasions, the Republic of Korea places a high priority on starting negotiations of an FMCT on the earliest possible date. At the same time, my delegation urges all States with nuclear capabilities to voluntarily declare moratoriums on the

production of fissile materials for weapons purposes without further delay if they have not done so.

Madam President, my delegation supports the establishment of a group of governmental experts in accordance with General Assembly resolution 67/53 of 3 December 2012 on an FMCT. We hope that the group will function as a catalyst for an FMCT negotiation and also stress that, as is stated in the resolution, we do not have to wait for the conclusion of the two-year mandate of the group to agree on negotiations on an FMCT.

My delegation is committed to making a constructive contribution to the future work related to an FMCT.

The President: I thank the representative of the Republic of Korea for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa.

Mr. Combrink (South Africa): Madam President, since this is the first time that my delegation is taking the floor under your presidency, allow me to thank you for your efforts and the manner in which you are leading the Conference. We recognize the serious challenges facing the Conference on Disarmament as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum and assure you of South Africa's readiness to work with you and the other presidents for the 2013 session to unblock the continued impasse through the resumption of substantive work.

Let me associate my delegation fully with the statement delivered by Brazil on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition. Like others, we also welcome the statement delivered by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. We thank the League for its important contribution to our work and support enhanced engagement between the Conference and civil society more broadly.

As you are aware, nuclear disarmament remains our highest priority. It is the lack of progress towards this goal that is our primary concern. Since becoming a member of the Conference, South Africa has consistently argued against maximalist positions that may inhibit efforts to secure progress on the nuclear disarmament agenda. My country has therefore supported a systematic and progressive approach towards achieving our goal of a world without nuclear weapons. We have remained supportive of the commencement and conclusion of negotiations in the Conference on a treaty that would ban the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices, a fissile material treaty that would fulfil both nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament objectives. A simple cut-off treaty would clearly not give effect to the demand of the vast majority of States for an instrument that would not only freeze the status quo but also contribute to the objective of a world free from the threat posed by nuclear weapons. If such a treaty is to be an element of a comprehensive framework of mutually reinforcing instruments, we remain unconvinced that an instrument limited in terms of scope and verification modalities would make a meaningful contribution to nuclear disarmament. Any instrument that could reinforce existing inequalities between those that have nuclear weapons and those that have given up the nuclear weapons option would not serve our collective interest of achieving a world without nuclear weapons. A treaty that would allow the continued development of new nuclear weapons may undermine the primary rationale for concluding such an instrument in the first place.

South Africa does not subscribe to the view that a fissile material treaty is the only item ripe for negotiation or that this should become a condition for further progress towards nuclear disarmament. We are all well aware that fissile materials, such as weapons-grade plutonium and highly enriched uranium, among others, are critical ingredients for the production of nuclear weapons. The control of such material and their means of production is therefore essential for the control of proliferation. A fissile material treaty could be an

important building block of any comprehensive framework to underpin a future world without nuclear weapons. However, this issue could also be dealt with as part of a more comprehensive effort aimed at banning the production of nuclear weapons.

South Africa believes that a fissile material treaty should be non-discriminatory and verifiable, fulfilling both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation objectives. Contrary to the arguments about the limitations of a future treaty, South Africa's experience has shown that, despite significant technical complexities that will need to be acknowledged, all of these can be overcome if the necessary political will exists. While we acknowledge the difficulties associated with the past production of fissile material, we believe that stocks should be addressed by a future treaty for it to be a credible instrument. Not only does the outright rejection of dealing with stocks even before the start of negotiations seem to be counterproductive in taking forward this issue, it also contradicts the so-called Shannon report and the mandate contained therein, and raises questions about the commitment of proponents of this view to the goal of nuclear disarmament. Importantly, such a treaty should give effect to the principles of transparency, irreversibility and verification. For such a treaty to be fully effective, we believe that it should be the product of inclusive multilateral disarmament negotiations.

Madam President, my delegation wishes to underline, once more, that a fissile material treaty should not become an end in itself. We recognize, however, that the elements of such a treaty are an integral part of the critical steps that need to be taken towards achieving and sustaining a world free from the unacceptable humanitarian consequences posed by nuclear weapons, as was again highlighted during the Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons held recently in Oslo.

The President: I thank the representative of South Africa for his statement and for his kind words. I now give the floor to the representative of Myanmar.

Mr. Wai (Myanmar): Madam President, as was announced previously, today's meeting is primarily devoted to the issue of a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). But my statement will cover not only the FMCT issue but other areas of critical importance, namely, nuclear disarmament and the state of the Conference on Disarmament.

The two processes of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. Conclusion of a treaty banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices is a logical step towards the ultimate goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

While emphasizing the need for a future treaty to cover both existing stockpiles and future production, it is also essential that any negotiating process also be transparent and inclusive within a comprehensive and balanced programme of work.

The continued existence of nuclear weapons and their deployment stand as one of the most serious humanitarian challenges and also pose the greatest threat to the very existence of humankind. The weapons can be triggered at any time, whether by miscalculation or by mistake or by wrong hands, posing a serious threat to the security of all nations. In this regard, we firmly believe that the best and the only absolute guarantee against a nuclear catastrophe is their complete and total elimination. Bearing this in mind, Myanmar participated in the Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons held in Oslo last week.

Despite the long-lasting call by the international community to reach our distant goal, my delegation is of the view that the major nuclear-power States are still far from fulfilling their commitments and responsibilities as stipulated in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the consensus agreements reached at the 2010 NPT Review Conference. In this regard, we would like to stress the need for all nuclear-

weapon States to fully and immediately comply with the 22-point action plan on nuclear disarmament of the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

Like other non-nuclear-weapon States under the NPT, Myanmar always has a strong expectation that we should receive negative security assurances from nuclear-weapon States.

We welcome the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference, to be held in Geneva from 22 April to 3 May 2013. We hope that the good work of the Preparatory Committee will lay a sound foundation for the success of the 2015 Review Conference.

Myanmar, as a State party, attaches great importance to the NPT and has expressed its readiness to accede to the additional protocol to the International Atomic Energy Agency's comprehensive safeguards agreements.

Myanmar also welcomes the decision of the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly to convene a high-level meeting on nuclear disarmament in September 2013 in New York.

We welcome and encourage the efforts to establish new nuclear-weapon-free zones in different parts of the world, including the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons.

We also welcome the efforts of the nuclear-weapon States to ratify the respective protocols of these treaties. We would also like to encourage them to sign the Protocol to the Bangkok Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone as early as possible.

It is imperative that the Conference resume its substantive work based on a comprehensive and balanced programme of work. In order to enable the Conference to adopt a comprehensive and balanced programme of work, we would like to call upon all member States to demonstrate political will and the utmost flexibility. Despite the deadlock that has existed for over 16 years in the Conference, Myanmar, as one of the original members of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament, remains faithful to its commitment to the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament created by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

Some delegations have expressed their frustration about the current situation in the Conference, but the majority, including Myanmar, still believe that the Conference is the most appropriate venue for negotiating multilateral disarmament treaties.

I would like to stress that the future of the Conference clearly depends on the genuine political will of the member States and on flexibility in their approach. Procedural matters alone cannot be held accountable for the stalemate of the Conference.

All of us need to think seriously to overcome the current state of affairs in the Conference and move its work forward. My delegation reaffirms its readiness to participate constructively in every effort aimed at achieving a balanced and comprehensive programme of work.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Myanmar for his statement and for his kind words. I now give the floor to the representative of Finland.

Ms. Kairamo (Finland): Madam President, I would like to start by expressing my delegation's gratitude and admiration for the excellent manner in which you have conducted your duties in chairing this conference.

At the outset of my statement I would like to say that Finland fully aligns itself with the statement given earlier on behalf of the European Union.

Finland attaches great importance to the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body and a crucial part of the United Nations disarmament machinery. As we have said earlier, we would be ready to start negotiations on all four core issues in the Conference on Disarmament. Nevertheless, as this road remains blocked, we should not remain paralysed. This is why we voted in favour of General Assembly resolution 67/53 of 3 December 2012 on a treaty banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other explosive devices (FMCT). My delegation would also like to commend our Canadian colleagues for the excellent groundwork they did when preparing the resolution. We are convinced that the established mechanism, namely, collecting the views of member States and establishing a group of governmental experts, will contribute to the work of the Conference and the United Nations disarmament machinery in general. The FMCT work is not starting from scratch, as we have heard many times already today. For years the issue has been dealt with in various discussions. For example, the technical experts' meetings organized by Germany and the Netherlands last year here in Geneva can contribute to the forthcoming work of the group of governmental experts. We see the group as a clear expert forum and hope that it will be able to bring us valuable substantial contributions, such as considering scope, fissile material definitions and verification mechanisms.

An effective FMCT would be a logical next step complementing the Treaty for the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Nuclear weapons are weapons of mass destruction in the true meaning of the term. We, the international community, are all responsible for ensuring that nuclear weapons are never used. For this we need intensive disarmament efforts supported by the whole international community.

Madam President, finally, let me also take this opportunity to welcome very much the statement by Ms. Fihn of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. In connection with International Women's Day, I would like to stress that the role of women in disarmament is as crucial as ever. We also warmly welcome the interaction between the Conference and civil society.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Finland for her statement and for her kind words. I now give the floor to the representative of Iran.

Mr. Daryaei (Islamic Republic of Iran): Madam President, since this is the first time that I am taking the floor under your presidency, allow me to congratulate you on the assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and thank you for the manner in which you are presiding over this body. I would like to assure you of the full cooperation of my delegation in discharging your important tasks. Allow me also to welcome the valuable statement by Ms. Fihn, the representative of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, in which she provided us with a very useful out-of-the-box review of the situation that we are facing.

A large number of members of the international community, including this delegation, have repeatedly called the attention of the international community to the threat posed by nuclear weapons to international peace and security as well as to the security of every individual State. Last week in Oslo the representatives of 127 countries alongside those of 11 international organizations and many NGOs discussed the catastrophic humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons on mankind and our planet. The common denominator of all statements was that the threat is huge, the grave humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons are enormous, nothing can be done for preparedness in the case of a deliberate or accidental nuclear detonation, and the only way to tackle this immediate threat is prevention. The best way of prevention is nuclear disarmament and total elimination of these inhuman and illegitimate weapons and all the stock of material necessary for producing these weapons by negotiation of a nuclear-weapon convention.

We are of the firm conviction that the existence of nuclear weapons is the greatest threat to the security of all nations. We have requested immediate action by the international community to eliminate that threat. One might ask what the first, best practical measure to reduce the danger of nuclear weapons is. In response, we believe that piecemeal undertakings and cost-free disjointed measures by the nuclear-weapon States are not an option. Thus we very much support the start of negotiations on a nuclear-weapon convention that totally and systematically prohibits the possession, production, development, stockpiling, transfer and use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. As we have already proposed, the nuclear-weapon convention as a framework and chapeau convention will include, *inter alia*, the following areas that are relevant to the topic of discussion for today: banning the production of all weapons-grade fissile material for military explosive purposes, and declaring all stocks of weapons-grade fissile material and their elimination in an irreversible and verifiable manner according to an agreed timetable. Therefore, if we start our negotiations on the nuclear-weapon convention, we can be sure that all aspects of fissile materials will be comprehensively tackled in a systematic manner. It is clear that this non-discriminatory, effectively verifiable, legally binding instrument will ban the production of, and provide the legal commitment for the destruction of, all existing fissile materials for nuclear weapons in an irreversible and verifiable manner. Therefore it will be perceived in the framework of nuclear disarmament and total elimination of nuclear weapons.

In this context the fissile material treaty would be a meaningful disarmament measure. Otherwise the fissile material treaty would only prohibit the production of surplus fissile material for nuclear-weapon States. That is an ineffective measure in the field of disarmament and is meaningless. In the same spirit, I once again re-emphasize that a fissile material treaty should not be turned into a futile and innocent instrument for the nuclear-weapon States and their stockpiles by narrowing it down to a polished, depleted package of non-proliferation. We will never accept such an approach. The treaty should be a clear and meaningful step for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in all their aspects. Past production and existing stocks as well as the future production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices must be covered under the scope of the treaty.

We believe that every State has a special responsibility to work towards the removal of the threat of the existence of nuclear weapons. The fissile material treaty only has added value if it adds a new firm commitment for the nuclear-weapon States, and this will happen only if it is inclusive of all nuclear-weapon States and those that have nuclear-weapon capability; if it covers all stocks of the nuclear-weapon States; and if it is universal. Having said that, we believe that the best place for the negotiation of a fissile material treaty is the Conference on Disarmament. We call on the Conference members to avoid divergent, unhelpful efforts outside the Conference which call the credibility of this body into question. We urge all members to do their utmost in a convergent manner to adopt and implement a balanced and comprehensive programme of work based on the agenda and dealing with all core issues in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Conference.

In response to some comments about my country at the previous meeting of the Conference, I would like to underline the following points:

First, resorting to such baseless and biased allegations against my country in no way helps France or any other country to evade its responsibilities and commitments on nuclear disarmament or whitewashes its record in this regard.

Second, the peaceful Iranian nuclear activities which have been put under the scrutiny of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) by Iran, even beyond its current obligations, are totally unrelated to the mandate and goals of this body. We are

working with IAEA as the competent authority, and as yet, contrary to the allegations raised, there is not even a single piece of evidence of diversion of our peaceful activities.

Third, we have constructively participated in the Almaty negotiations, and we will pursue seriously and positively the upcoming follow-up for these negotiations. As was confirmed by both sides, these negotiations were useful. The final outcome of these negotiations depends on the seriousness and faithfulness of the five permanent members of the Security Council and Germany, or “P5 plus one”, and on avoiding harmful and unconstructive actions by them. Indeed, sticking to or reverting again to the past failed experiences of prejudice, biased propaganda, and pressure against the great nation of Iran is not at all helpful and destroys the emerging confidence necessary for the success of the negotiation.

Fourth, it was evident that the policy of talk and pressure is doomed to failure. I therefore invite those few countries with hostile attitudes and conduct during past decades to change gears from confrontation mode to negotiating mode for the purpose of cooperation. The window of opportunity is still open.

The President: I thank the representative of Iran for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan.

Mr. Khan (Pakistan): Madam President, since this is the first time my delegation has taken the floor under your presidency, let me congratulate you on the assumption of the office of President of the Conference on Disarmament. I also wish to acknowledge the transparent and efficient manner in which you have conducted your work as President. You can count on the cooperation of my delegation. We also welcome the statement delivered on behalf of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom.

The multilateral processes in the field of disarmament will strengthen international security and meet global expectations only when they are based on the principles of non-discrimination and respect for the security interests of all States. Successful multilateral agreements require compromises and consensus. But these cannot be one-sided, based on double standards, or undermine the fundamental security interests of States. As such, a treaty on fissile material divorced from this reality and shorn of the content that would make it a true instrument of international security holds no appeal for us. We do not believe that any artificial distinction between the issues ripe for negotiation and those not ripe for negotiation can be drawn up. Unless all agree on a state of ripeness, it is simply an imaginary phenomenon.

It would be useful to reflect on the history of the fissile material issue in the past decades and see how any progress on this issue in multilateral disarmament forums was stonewalled. If proposals to bring the question of fissile material into the arms control framework had been accepted in the 1960s or 1970s it could have staunched the vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons and dampened the cold-war nuclear arms race. However, the major Powers did not brook any impediment to their pursuit of strategic sufficiency in fissile material stocks. Now, after having developed huge numbers of nuclear weapons as well as stocks of fissile material that can be quickly be converted to nuclear warheads, these major Powers are ready to conclude a treaty that will only ban future production of fissile materials. This follows the pattern of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, where major Powers agreed to a test ban only when the results generated by the thousands of nuclear tests and the possibility of tests in laboratory conditions had obviated the need for further underground nuclear tests.

With respect to a proposed fissile material treaty, the key issue confronting us is whether we want it to be a partial and selective non-proliferation instrument or a step that contributes towards nuclear disarmament. The negotiations for a fissile material treaty cannot be divorced from the objectives which for so long have sustained the demand for

such a treaty. These objectives were, and continue to remain, the promotion of nuclear disarmament. A treaty on fissile material which only serves the interests of those who now have a glut of fissile materials for weapons purposes cannot be a contribution to nuclear disarmament unless its scope explicitly includes a reduction in the size of the extant stockpiles of fissile materials. A simple ban on the future production of fissile material would leave an asymmetry in stocks. To any objective analyst, it seems evident that the aim of a treaty which bans only future production would be merely to lock in the advantage of those with larger stockpiles, globally or regionally. If we want this treaty to contribute to nuclear disarmament, it has to cover the question of existing stocks.

The proposed treaty would have far-reaching implications for the national security of many Conference on Disarmament members, and particularly Pakistan. We have already explained in detail how the developments of the past few years have accentuated our security concerns. There have been attempts to downplay the magnitude and impact of these steps. It is, however, not lost on us. Accordingly, from our perspective the proposal for a fissile material cut-off or a simple ban on future production that ignores all important issues of existing stocks will neither contribute to nuclear disarmament nor address regional asymmetries. Such a measure will not even be a true non-proliferation instrument, since this limited scope would allow the diversion of existing stocks as well as future accumulations, through routes opened up by special dispensations, for nuclear weapons production.

We have heard repeated references to the Shannon mandate as the basis for addressing the issue of stockpiles. The kind of constructive ambiguity enshrined in the Shannon mandate may have been sufficient in 1995 or shortly thereafter but is certainly not so in the present circumstances.

In view of the developments in our region that we have referred to in detail in the past, the issue cannot be addressed by any kind of constructive ambiguity but needs to be addressed in a very direct manner. We have noted that some countries have in the past talked about taking negotiations on this issue outside the Conference on Disarmament. The wisdom of this approach can be judged from similar other experiments. States that are not part of negotiations that impact their fundamental national security interests will have no interest in consenting to outcomes engineered without their participation.

In our view, the decisions of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament remain the only international framework adopted by consensus governing the multilateral disarmament machinery as well as its objective and principles. Pakistan, along with the vast majority of United Nations Member States, including the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement, believes that the issue of nuclear disarmament is ripe for negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament. This is the principal purpose of the Conference on Disarmament, and it must get on with it.

The President: I thank the representative of Pakistan for his statement and for his kind words. I now give the floor to the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Mr. Ri Jang Gon (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Madam President, the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea would first of all like to comment on the position of the Non-Aligned Countries regarding strengthening of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). The CTBT basically aims at not allowing the qualitative improvement of existing nuclear weapons or the development of any types of nuclear weapons through banning all sorts of nuclear tests that accompany fissile nuclear explosions in the air, in outer space, underwater and underground. Accordingly, all Governments that have signed and ratified the CTBT are allowed neither to conduct nuclear tests or other nuclear explosions inside their own countries nor to be involved in any kind of act that instigates or encourages such explosions. In a nutshell, the

main objective of the CTBT is to fundamentally eliminate any possibilities of nuclear development. Once the CTBT becomes effective and displays its vitality then there is no doubt that it will make a great contribution to the world's peace and stability. However, the CTBT still has not come into effect though 16 years have passed since its adoption. Then what could be the reason for that? It is that the current situation regarding nuclear disarmament is too distant from the ideal of the CTBT. Realistic and massive nuclear disarmament is the precondition for enforcing the CTBT, in our view. But currently worldwide nuclear disarmament is not making satisfactory progress due to the disagreements and conflicts among the interests of the main nuclear Powers.

In case we avoid the complete elimination of existing nuclear weapons and unilaterally execute the CTBT, it would give rise to serious inequality and imbalance in the security of each State, and this would bring about irretrievable consequences for global peace and stability. Up to the end of 2009 the world recorded a total of 2,054 nuclear tests, and 99.99 per cent of those were carried out by the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council. However, the Ambassador of Germany did not say any word to the big Powers which had such recourse, although expressing his one-sided approach on the issue of the Korean peninsula. The nuclear Powers conducted many nuclear tests and built up their nuclear arsenals as much as they could and thus monopolized nuclear weapons. Therefore, no more nuclear tests are necessary for them, and still they can exercise their influence as much as they want on the international stage as nuclear Powers by depending on their existing nuclear arsenals. Given the current situation, countries like the Democratic People's Republic of Korea cannot but take the issue of signing the CTBT seriously because they are placed in special circumstances beyond their control where they need to be equipped with self-defensive nuclear deterrents in order to cope with the direct nuclear threats of the only nuclear superpower of the world. Only when the CTBT is enforced under the precondition that nuclear weapons would be completely removed on a worldwide scale can all States be granted practically equal and just obligations and rights. In order to make the CTBT effective, in reality, its preconditions should be ready, and for that the main nuclear Powers should fulfil their responsibilities and duties and efforts to thoroughly remove the source of nuclear war in the world.

Madam President, regrettably, Germany provoked the Democratic People's Republic of Korea today very seriously in this chamber, even blamed the firm self-defensive measures taken by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea leadership recently to cope with nuclear threats from the outside force. His remarks do not give any help to the resolution of the current extreme situation on the Korean peninsula. My delegation takes this opportunity to tell the Ambassador of Germany that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as it did in the past, totally rejects the United Nations Security Council resolution against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea cooked up a short while ago. It is a wanton violation of the sovereignty of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as you know very well. I do believe huge armed forces on both sides are standing against each other on the Korean peninsula. Such being the case, what is the threatening language Germany was talking about? Let me ask Germany a question. Can you remain an onlooker to an armed invasion from foreign aggressors? We are not going to repeat our firm counteraction in detail today, since we have already stated it more than once.

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

Ms. Kasnakli (Turkey): Madam President, my country's position on arms control and disarmament, as elaborated on many occasions in the past, is very well known to the Conference. Nevertheless, I would like to make a few additional comments.

First, I wish to stress that Turkey's security policy excludes the production and use of all kinds of weapons of mass destruction. We advocate global, overall disarmament and

support all efforts aimed at sustaining international security through multilateral arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament.

Turkey is party to all international non-proliferation instruments and export control regimes and spares no effort to contribute to their universalization and effective implementation. We believe that the success of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation efforts depends on the effective functioning of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) regime.

The first session of the Preparatory Committee last year was a good start for a new NPT review cycle. We hope the second session, which will be held here in Geneva, will also be a good opportunity to continue reviewing the implementation status of the 2010 NPT action plan.

In connection with the said action plan, we regret the postponement of the conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. We call upon all concerned to continue to work with the facilitator and conveners in order to hold this conference as early as possible.

Having said this, I would like to stress that the Conference on Disarmament, as the sole multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament, has an important role to play. Therefore, Turkey hopes to see the Conference revitalized with its present membership, the concerns of all member States addressed and the current stalemate overcome. It is also our hope that serious work on all core issues will start through a consensual programme of work. Like many other delegations here, Turkey is of the conviction that the Conference possesses the mandate, membership and rules of procedure to discharge its functions.

Turkey supported General Assembly resolution 67/53 of 3 December 2012 on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. We hope that the group of governmental experts established by this resolution will contribute to global disarmament efforts and will help the Conference to resume its work.

Starting negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) will be a significant building block in the process of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. It will further pave the way for parallel advances on other core agenda items. To ensure a good start to negotiations, all nuclear-weapon States should declare and uphold a moratorium on production. Eventually, a successful negotiated FMCT would introduce a quantitative limit on the fissile material that is designed for use in nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices.

Nevertheless, Turkey is of the opinion that FMCT negotiations should be comprehensive and non-discriminatory. Therefore, a future treaty should include the issue of stockpiles and effective verification. It goes without saying that all national concerns regarding a possible treaty can and should be brought to the table during negotiations.

The President: I thank the representative of Turkey for her statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Algeria.

Mr. Khelif (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): Madam President, first of all, my delegation would like to join others in welcoming the statement made by the representative of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and to express our country's interest in and support for the role women could play in promoting the cause of disarmament and of peace and international security in general.

The Algerian delegation thanks you, Madam President, for giving us the opportunity to discuss the issue of banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. We are delighted to participate in this debate. We would

like to reaffirm our support for the start of negotiations in the Conference on a treaty on this subject as part of a comprehensive and balanced programme of work, on the basis of the report contained in document CD/1299 adopted by the Conference in March 1995 and the elements contained therein, including the mandate set out in that document.

The conclusion of such a treaty in accordance with the parameters set out in document CD/1299 would, in our view, constitute an important horizontal and vertical non-proliferation measure and a contribution towards nuclear disarmament.

Today the Algerian delegation would like to present its views on some issues that should be taken into consideration in drafting this treaty.

First, with regard to definitions, the Algerian delegation joins those who believe that the definitions contained in article XX of the statute of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) could serve as a basis for the definitions to be included in the treaty.

Regarding the scope of the treaty, as my delegation already pointed out in a statement made at the plenary meeting of 29 January of this year, such a treaty will be meaningful only if it is part of a broader focus on disarmament. Thus, in our view, the treaty should apply not only to future production but also to existing stocks of fissile material, in accordance with document CD/1299.

The future treaty should serve as a basis for eliminating existing stocks, and in this regard we would like to remind colleagues of the statement by the Group of 21 issued under the symbol CD/1549 in 1998, which states that the treaty must constitute a nuclear disarmament measure and be an integral step leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons, and that it should also promote international cooperation for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

In this vein, the questions that continue to be raised now within the framework of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) about uranium enrichment and fears of resulting proliferation give us reason to hope that such an instrument could establish multilateral mechanisms and measures that would further ensure the right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy and at the same time dispel fears and concerns about the diversion of nuclear material to prohibited uses.

One of the features of the new instrument we are working towards will be to incorporate the principle of the universality of nuclear disarmament by ensuring that all fissile material obtained from dismantled nuclear weapons is diverted to peaceful purposes.

Verification is essential for building the necessary trust between States parties, establishing transparency about their nuclear programmes and ensuring that they fulfil their commitments. The purpose of verification measures would be to ensure that fissile materials are neither produced for nuclear weapons nor diverted for this purpose.

In this context, in order to be credible the treaty must be based on a verification system capable of detecting and deterring any and all violations in real time. Such a system should be based on a safeguards regime that covers all uranium enrichment and reprocessing facilities, so as to ensure that fissile material is not produced, observe and monitor their use and detect any and all production in a timely manner.

However, would a safeguards regime limited only to such facilities be able to ensure that uranium enrichment and the separation of plutonium from spent fuel in order to produce nuclear weapons did not occur? In our view, such a regime would be insufficient. A verification mechanism that is effective enough to detect any prohibited activity will require more sophisticated, broader and much more comprehensive measures covering all facilities and fissile material, whether for civilian or military purposes, as well as facilities that are no longer operational. Such a maximalist approach might seem to some to be too

ambitious, or even unrealistic, but we believe that it is the only effective solution and way forward.

The safeguards regime of a treaty banning the production of fissile material could build on the relevant provisions of the NPT and the definitions of fissile material contained in article XX of the statute of IAEA.

We believe that a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons would have the same objective as the NPT and subsequent safeguards agreements concluded between IAEA and nuclear-weapon States. It is therefore worth asking why the two instruments should have different verification mechanisms.

A safeguards regime ensuring effective prohibition requires access to a sufficient body of information on the production of fissile material and on the quantity and nature of stocks. The regime should also include detailed inventories of fissile material for civil and military use, including material that has been obtained by dismantling nuclear warheads under bilateral nuclear disarmament treaties or through unilateral action.

Effectiveness and cost considerations should be taken into account when deciding which body will be tasked with verification. IAEA should play an important role in this regard, given its expertise, its know-how and its experience in the field of non-proliferation.

The President: I thank the representative of Algeria for his statement and for his kind words. I now give the floor to the representative of India.

Mr. Gill (India): Madam President, we would like to begin by reiterating India's support for the early commencement of substantive work in the Conference on Disarmament on the basis of a programme of work. As we stated last week, the foremost priority for India has been and continues to be nuclear disarmament. Without prejudice to the priority India attaches to nuclear disarmament, we support the negotiation in this forum of a universal, non-discriminatory and internationally verifiable fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) that meets India's national security interests. India is a nuclear-weapon State and a responsible member of the international community and will approach FMCT negotiations as such.

We have been consistent in our support for FMCT negotiations for a long time. India was one of the original cosponsors of General Assembly resolution 48/75L of 16 December 1993, adopted by consensus, which envisaged an FMCT as a significant contribution to non-proliferation in all its aspects. We joined consensus in the Conference on the establishment of an ad hoc committee on an FMCT in 1995 and then again in 1998. Similarly, India did not stand in the way of consensus on the programme of work contained in document CD/1864, which provided, inter alia, for the establishment of a working group to negotiate an FMCT. India was able to join the international consensus on an FMCT in 1993, as it reflected with clarity the common understanding of the basic objective of the treaty. The mandate for the proposed treaty, explicitly reflected in resolution 48/75L and reconfirmed by the Shannon report (CD/1299), is to negotiate a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. This mandate was also reaffirmed in the Conference in 1998 and 2009 in its consensus decisions and reiterated in resolutions on the FMCT in the General Assembly. We do not favour reopening this mandate, on which there is long-standing international consensus. We should have no illusions about the opposition to FMCT negotiations, and that is a matter of concern not just for India but for the international community as a whole.

India's support for FMCT negotiations in the Conference is consistent with our interest in strengthening the global non-proliferation regime that would add a measure of strategic predictability and a baseline for future global nuclear disarmament efforts. Given

this objective and given the Conference's vocation, it is essential that all relevant countries participate in these negotiations in the Conference and contribute to their successful outcome. To conclude, the Conference should be allowed to fulfil its mandate as a negotiating forum by commencing negotiations on the basis of an early decision on its programme of work. It is unfortunate that the Conference has been prevented, on one pretext or another, from commencing substantive work in the immediate context on an FMCT or, for that matter, on issues that command strong support from members of the Conference, be they nuclear disarmament, negative security assurances or the prevention of an arms race in outer space. While efforts must continue on the latter, in our view there is strong support in the international community for the early commencement of negotiations on an FMCT.

The President: I thank the representative of India. There are no further speakers on the list.

As this is the last plenary under India's presidency, I would like to use a couple of minutes to offer a few comments, if I may, on the experience of the last couple of weeks.

It has been India's privilege to hold the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament these past four weeks. I would like to thank colleagues for the support you have extended to the delegation of India in our work, and for your openness and your willingness to share your views. I have attempted to consult each and every delegation in this chamber and to reflect on and take account of all points of view, in particular in relation to steps that may be taken for the Conference on Disarmament to undertake substantive work. I will return to this in a moment.

In these last four weeks, we have had the privilege of welcoming to the Conference 11 high-level speakers who have shared their views on the most vital issues on the disarmament agenda and on the role of the Conference as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. Without prejudice to continuing work on trying to devise a draft programme of work, we have also scheduled ad hoc plenary meetings on two of the core issues discussed by the Conference, nuclear disarmament and a fissile material cut-off treaty. I am happy with the response to this opportunity for all of us to address new developments and update positions, in particular since some issues on our agenda are and will be the subject of discussions elsewhere.

As I have said earlier, I have attempted to seek the views of all delegations on the way we might proceed. It is my duty as the Conference President to convey to you what I have heard during my consultations, and to attempt to draw some tentative conclusions. I hope these may also be of some use to the incoming President, my colleague and friend the Ambassador of Indonesia.

First and foremost, a large number of colleagues, representing all regional groups, have expressed their appreciation for the efforts made by my predecessor, the Ambassador of Hungary, in preparing and tabling a draft programme of work. This text regrettably failed to find consensus. As a consequence of that happening early in our session, many delegations feel there would be little value in continuing on the basis of document CD/1948. However, some other delegations believe that there may be merit in consulting further to identify obstacles in that document and addressing them.

In this context, I must note that there was a strong sentiment expressed in favour of treating nuclear disarmament and FMCT separately, as was always done in the past and as is set out in document CD/1864.

Based on these differing perceptions, I was also left with a strong sense that consensus may not be possible through tinkering with the mandates mentioned in document CD/1948.

On a related point, I asked delegations if there is any other approach to a programme of work that may be taken at this stage. Many delegations cautioned that repeated failures to adopt a programme of work add to the sense of frustration with the Conference, and that therefore a fresh attempt should be made only when there is a reasonable chance of succeeding. Meanwhile, document CD/1864 remains our signpost. Accompanying this, there was a strong sense that efforts towards a programme of work should continue in any case, and that any opportunity to return to the consensus of May 2009 should be seized whenever it might present itself.

I also asked colleagues whether, in parallel with our efforts to come to an agreement on a programme of work, we might continue substantive discussions on the Conference agenda in line with what has been done in the past few years, either as part of a schedule of activities or in the form of plenary meetings devoted to such issues. Some responses were clearly sceptical, as such discussions were felt to be repetitive and to detract from the primary mandate of this forum to negotiate. At the same time, a number of delegations felt that there would be value in creating such opportunities for substantive discussions, also keeping in mind fresh developments relevant to the core issues.

I am glad that the flexibility shown by Conference members has enabled us to offer such an opportunity on two of the four core issues, and I hope we will continue to have more such opportunities.

I should also say that I heard from several colleagues, cutting across regional groups, a desire to attempt an in-between approach sometimes referred to as a simplified or light programme of work. These colleagues, in fact, tend to agree with those who are sceptical about the value of thematic plenary debates and believe that it is more important to locate thematic discussions not in plenaries but in subsidiary bodies, and that such discussions could be reported on factually either by the chairs of the said subsidiary bodies or by the Conference president. A concern expressed with regard to such an approach is that it would be difficult to reconcile with the Conference's mandate as a negotiating forum. In response, some colleagues have said that, while they agree that the Conference is fundamentally a negotiating body, it is important to retain the Conference's credibility as well as to enable the Conference to speak to important discussions on disarmament issues taking place. It has also been mentioned that a so-called simplified programme of work would be an interim or provisional measure without prejudice to a classical programme of work such as that in document CD/1864 or another such programme of work in the future. I believe that delegations advocating such an approach may need to consult and work to develop and clarify the content of a possible simplified programme of work, taking into account the concerns expressed in this regard and the possibilities in the Conference rules of procedure.

Distinguished colleagues, I have tried to convey to you, as precisely as possible, the different perspectives and concerns that were shared with me during the last few weeks. In the course of these conversations I reached the inescapable conclusion that, given the distance between different points of view on what an acceptable programme of work should contain, and the benchmark we have in the form of document CD/1864, the most practical approach for the present would be for the Conference presidency to keep in touch with all colleagues on a continuing basis and to foster a consultative climate with the aim of moving forward. Since at this point there is not sufficient common ground to put forward another draft, that was not a choice available to me. I leave in the capable hands of succeeding Conference presidents the continuing search for common ground.

After having spoken to so many colleagues and having consulted as widely as possible, I am pleased to report that, despite the legitimate frustration felt by many members at the absence of substantive work, including negotiations, undertaken through an agreed programme of work, there is an overwhelming sense that the Conference fulfils a unique function. When the international community has demonstrated the requisite political

will, the Conference has been able to move forward beyond discussions to actual negotiation of instruments. That is the task before us. It is a worthy task given the absolute and irreplaceable contribution to international peace and security of treaties negotiated in the Conference.

I would like to conclude by wishing our colleague from Indonesia good luck in his efforts to steer the Conference on Disarmament in the weeks ahead.

I also reiterate my thanks for the support received from all delegations, from the other presidencies of this session and from the secretariat, led by the Secretary-General of the Conference, and in particular from our interpreters during this session.

As there appear to be no other requests for the floor, this concludes our business for today.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held next Tuesday, 19 March, at 10 a.m. It is my understanding, from consultations with the Ambassador of Indonesia, our next president, that the next plenary will be devoted to the prevention of an arms race in outer space, and the one after that to negative security assurances. With that I conclude this session.

The meeting rose at 1.25 p.m.