



General Assembly

Seventieth session

First Committee

18th meeting

Tuesday, 27 October 2015, 3 p.m.
New York

Official Records

Chair: Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands)

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda items 88 to 105 (continued)

Thematic discussion on item subjects and introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions and decisions submitted under all disarmament and related international security agenda items

The Chair: This afternoon the Committee will first conclude its consideration of the conventional weapons cluster and thereafter take up the disarmament machinery cluster. All speakers are kindly requested to observe the time limit of five minutes when speaking in a national capacity and seven minutes when speaking on behalf of a group. We will now hear the remaining speakers on the list for the conventional weapons cluster.

Mr. Kullane (Somalia): Since this is the first time my delegation is taking the floor, I would like to warmly congratulate you, Sir, and the members of the Bureau on your election to the Chair of the First Committee.

Somalia fully associates itself with the statements delivered earlier in the discussion by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement; Nigeria, on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/C.1/70/PV.17); and Egypt, on behalf of the Group of Arab States (see A/C.1/70/PV.16). I would also like to highlight a few issues that are priorities for Somalia.

Somalia supports the view of small arms and light weapons as the true weapons of mass destruction. It is apparent that such weapons are still the ones that kill and maim shocking numbers of civilians worldwide. They

continue to be catastrophic for peace and security as well as for development prospects, hindering economic and social progress and stifling opportunities for a better quality of life, particularly for those in greatest need. Sadly, it is developing countries that bear the brunt of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and that are the primary targets of large numbers of international arms transfer agreements. Many of these countries are preferred customers for arms sales, with little or no thought given to the potential impact on regional security and stability. The consequence is a cycle of regional arms races that are mainly in volatile parts of the world and that inflict confusion, chaos and mayhem on civilian populations.

Somalia stresses that the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons helps to make armed violence worse and continues to have detrimental humanitarian and socioeconomic consequences. We believe that its prevention should receive inclusive and integrated attention at the international, regional and subregional levels. As a factor that continues to nourish terrorism and organized crime, it is a persistent major concern for the international community. In that connection, Somalia is among those States that continue to fight the growing scourge of terrorism.

Somalia values the extensive efforts that have been made in recent years to address the issue of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, beginning in 2000 with the Bamako Declaration on Small Arms Proliferation and continuing with the African Union Constitutive Act and its 2002 Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the

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African Union and Solemn Declaration on a Common African Defence and Security Policy, announced in Sirte in 2004. Other relevant efforts include the Nairobi Protocol for the Prevention, Control and Reduction of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States and work done within the framework of the Community of Sahelo-Saharan States and other relevant subregional initiatives aimed at dealing with the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in Africa.

Somalia became the ninety-seventh State party to the Convention on Cluster Munitions when its instrument of ratification was deposited with the Secretary-General at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 30 September. The two major reasons driving our decision to join the Convention were, first, that cluster munitions have broadly distributed effects and do not distinguish between civilians and combatants, and secondly, that their use leaves behind large amounts of dangerous unexploded ordnance. Such remnants kill and injure civilians, obstruct economic and social development and have other severe consequences that persist for years and even decades afterwards.

Somalia reiterates its belief that the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons are particularly crucial. We continue to highlight the importance of their effective implementation and to emphasize how essential international cooperation and assistance are to that implementation.

The prevention of human suffering continues to be central to the entire issue of dealing with conventional weapons. Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) was the first to address the unique and disproportionate impact that armed conflict has on women. Since then, while international awareness of and responses to the gender implications of weapons, armed violence and armed conflict have improved, we know that more must be done. The gender implications of certain forms of weapons warrant more vigilance and focus in research and in the political debate. A gender vantage point should therefore be integrated into all disarmament and arms control efforts and the equal involvement of women and men at all stages and levels of decision-making encouraged.

In conclusion, while regulating conventional weapons and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is important, durable solutions can be achieved only by addressing the root causes of conflicts and instability. Global spending on conventional weapons has increased tremendously, and yet the entire budget of the United Nations, the Organization created to protect succeeding generations from the scourge of war, is equivalent to less than 3 per cent of the world's military expenditures. Getting that balance right would go a long way towards reducing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

Ms. Chan (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): In the wake of the holding in August of the First Conference of the States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, Costa Rica urges more States to sign and ratify the Treaty and those that have already ratified it to work for its full and effective implementation. The implementation stage will be decisive in ensuring that the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) attains the goals that inspired it. It will require significant efforts at the national, regional and international levels. Costa Rica is grateful for the cooperation it is receiving from the project under which the German Federal Office for Economic Affairs and Export Control is implementing European Union activities in support of the Treaty's implementation. We would also like to highlight the work being done by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean to support Latin American and Caribbean States in effectively implementing the Treaty.

Looking ahead to the next Conference of States parties, we should also work hard to finalize reporting templates. Costa Rica will continue to insist that they be made public so as to foster transparency in international weapons transfers. We are one of the four Vice-Presidents for the next Conference and have clearly demonstrated our commitment to the Treaty as a model for effective implementation and good practices in Central America.

It is also essential that we strengthen the synergies between the ATT and complementary instruments such as the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We hope that progress can be made on this and other important topics during next year's Sixth Biennial Meeting of States of the Programme of Action. In that regard, we should intensify our efforts within the Programme of

Action and adopt legally binding instruments aimed at combating the commercialization, marketing and illicit brokering of weapons. We must work to develop robust, mandatory stockpile-management standards and address excessive production of armaments. Costa Rica would also like to emphasize the significance of Security Council resolutions 2117 (2013) and 2220 (2015), of which we were a sponsor.

Costa Rica reiterates its condemnation of the recent use of cluster munitions, regardless of who may be responsible, against civilian populations in Syria, Yemen, Ukraine and South Sudan, and its belief in the crucial importance of ensuring that all States adhere to the Convention and implement the Dubrovnik Action Plan. In that regard, Costa Rica is honoured to be a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.1/70/L.49, which Croatia has introduced on the topic, and calls for more States to join with us. We support and would like to highlight the initiative that Austria launched last month on addressing the use of explosive weapons with broadly distributed effects in populated areas, which should be considered a humanitarian issue to be urgently addressed.

As we said during the general debate (see A/C.1/70/PV.4), Costa Rica is worried about the use of armed drones for carrying out selective killings outside zones of armed conflict. Such operations are carried out in secret and have killed thousands and injured many more, including civilians. We are entering a new era in which the deployment of remotely controlled weapon systems appears to be the norm. The latest study of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs on armed unmanned aerial vehicles explores the need to increase transparency, supervision and accountability for the use of such vehicles outside active conflict zones. It should serve as a basis for a much wider debate on the topic.

The use of armed drones should not be seen as an easy solution to complicated conflicts. Whenever armed drones are used, it should be done in accordance with the principles of proportionality in the use of force and the obligation to distinguish between civilians and combatants, and with other relevant legal instruments. The debate on the subject should be framed in terms of armed drones' humanitarian impact, including the human rights aspects and those relating to international humanitarian law and human security, as well as moral and ethical standards.

In 2013, we began to be aware of the ethical, legal and technical concerns surrounding lethal autonomous weapon systems. Two years later, while many questions about this subject have been answered, many have not. Costa Rica agrees with other delegations on the need to define what is meant by the concept of significant human control. We also support the establishment of a group of governmental experts who would provide recommendations on steps that could be taken and that could enter into consideration at the review conference to be held next year.

Lastly, Costa Rica would like to emphasize the role of civil society in dealing with the issue of conventional weapons. We value its contributions to identifying problems, seeking solutions and drawing States' attention in order to address the challenges, old and new, that the international community is facing.

Ms. Roopnarine (Trinidad and Tobago): At the outset, Trinidad and Tobago aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Guyana (see A/C.1/70/PV.16) on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

My country is neither a manufacturer nor an exporter of conventional weapons, nor is it a large-scale importer of such weapons, but we have not been spared the destructive effects of the illegal trade in small arms and light weapons and their associated ammunition. We continue to be adversely affected by cross-border illegal activity linked to illegal drug trafficking, money laundering and cybercrime, to name only a few problems. We are, however, encouraged by the positive momentum we have seen over the past year for regulating and monitoring conventional weapons. At the same time, we urge that global efforts to address such threats be maintained.

Trinidad and Tobago is not a society beset by civil war, but in many cases the misuse of small arms and light weapons in our country has contributed significantly to violence and instability, which in turn have imperilled citizens' security. My delegation is convinced that any action aimed at stemming the proliferation of small arms and light weapons must be carried out primarily through multilateral initiatives. In that regard, we welcome the convening in August of the first Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty. We believe that the core provisions of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) are consistent with our own national security interests, which are about

preventing the diversion of illegal conventional arms to illicit markets. Trinidad and Tobago has been actively engaged in the ATT's implementation process and will continue to be.

We call on all States parties, especially exporters and manufacturers, that have primary responsibility for the international trade in conventional arms, to be consistent in honouring in good faith their legally binding obligations under the Treaty. My delegation is pleased to see that barely two months after the Conference, eight more countries have ratified the Treaty, bringing the current total of States parties to 77, and we join others in encouraging the Treaty's universalization.

The successful convening in June of the Second Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts under the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects reaffirmed the international community's commitment to implementing the Programme of Action. In that regard, my delegation looks forward to actively participating in June 2016 in the Sixth Biennial Meeting of States on the implementation of the Programme of Action. It is our hope that it will provide a platform for achieving clear and tangible results that could be realized by the third Review Conference of the Programme of Action, to be held in 2018. For us, one of the major outcomes of the Sixth Biennial Meeting must be a mechanism for strengthening international assistance and cooperation and sharing best practices.

In honouring its commitment to transparency in the acquisition of small arms and light weapons, Trinidad and Tobago continues to submit its relevant annual reports in a timely and accurate manner to the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. Local efforts continue to implement the Programme of Action's companion mechanism, the International Tracing Instrument (ITI), and we have designated measures for giving effect to the ITI, including the establishment of a national coordinating agency on small arms, the identification and destruction of surplus weapon stocks and the supervision and monitoring of legally registered firearms. We are also mindful of women's indispensable role and the importance of engaging civil society in helping to combat the spread of small arms and light weapons.

My delegation continues to embrace the support provided by the United Nations Regional Centre for

Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, which has supported and assisted CARICOM member States with capacity-building measures and technical assistance programmes, and we look forward to continued collaboration with it.

In conclusion, Trinidad and Tobago remains committed to working as a Member of the United Nations to address the challenges posed by the proliferation and misuse of and the unacceptable harm caused by small arms and light weapons and their ammunition, as well as by other categories of conventional weapons.

Ms. Urruela Arenales (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): We associate ourselves with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/70/PV.17).

The year 2015 is a momentous one for the United Nations, both because it is the seventieth anniversary of the Organization and for its adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), which affects the work of every entity in the Organization, including the First Committee. Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals recognizes that we must have just, peaceful and inclusive societies in order to achieve sustainable development, and that armed violence and the illicit trade in arms create obstacles to socioeconomic development and the achievement of human rights, health and stability.

Small arms and light weapons, and their proliferation and illegal trafficking, are responsible for hundreds of thousands of deaths every year. In my country, as in many others, an end to conflict does not mean an end to violence, which can sometimes persist for decades. It is a scourge that transcends borders and that requires a collective response and a multilateral framework robust enough to deal with it. That is why for my delegation a fundamental aspect of the issue is the effective implementation of both the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT).

Although the two instruments differ in nature — the first being universal but voluntary and the second being the first legally binding instrument to regulate the arms trade and prevent illicit trafficking — they share the same goal and should complement and reinforce each other. While the Programme of Action is not binding, it is an important tool for mobilizing international

cooperation to combat the illicit trade in small arms. But it must be strengthened. It is important that at the Biennial Meeting of the States scheduled for 2016 we do not content ourselves with simply reiterating the same commitments and principles, as has been the case at previous meetings, but that we make real progress towards ensuring a positive assessment for the instrument at its next Review Conference, in 2018.

The Programme of Action and the ATT are related, and it is vital that we enhance the synergies and complementarities between the two instruments. So far we have not been able to do that within the framework of the meetings and conferences of the Programme of Action, and in our view that not only has a negative impact on their relevance and effectiveness, it also means that we are neglecting a fundamental aspect of the problem and are therefore only partially addressing the issue of illicit trade. Guatemala will participate actively in both meetings, and we urge that this topic be included, along with the subject of ammunition, parts and components, which we consider essential. Regional mechanisms are also essential, and in that regard we appreciate the work of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean.

We also wish to express our concern about the devastating humanitarian consequences of using explosive weapons in populated areas. In that regard, we would like to recall here the importance of respect for international humanitarian law and the responsibility of States to protect their civilian populations.

Finally, Guatemala reaffirms its commitment to the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Cluster munitions have devastating humanitarian consequences and cause unacceptable harm to civilians, who are the main victims of gunfire and indiscriminate violence in populated areas, especially in cities, where the warring parties do not distinguish between combatants and civilians. The damage and devastation that result from such weapons are totally disproportionate to the military gains they produce. In addition, thousands of people are killed and injured every year by remnants of such munitions, which can remain unexploded for decades. Guatemala firmly condemns their use by anyone under any circumstances as a violation of the principles enshrined in international humanitarian law. It is vital that we contribute to the Convention's effective implementation and universality, and in that regard we were pleased to note the recent success of the

Convention's first Review Conference and its adoption of the Dubrovnik Declaration and Plan of Action.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of Nigeria to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/70/L.54.

Mr. Imohe (Nigeria): Sir, my delegation would like to reaffirm its confidence in your experience and ability to steer our ship to a purposeful destination.

Over the years, people have died needlessly from arms and ammunitions primarily produced for the defence and security needs of nation States and for lawful uses. Indeed, our debates in this cluster have so far demonstrated the magnitude of the continued challenge we face globally in the form of the proliferation of illicitly acquired conventional weapons. Small arms and light weapons, for instance, are responsible for more than half a million deaths every year. Evidence abounds that violence resulting from weapons used in conflict kills, on average, almost 600,000 people annually. From Africa to the Middle East, the unprecedented carnage unleashed by terrorists and other armed militias has left cities and communities destroyed or deserted, along with precious lives, property and livelihoods lost.

It was in that context that my delegation warmly welcomed the entry into force on 24 December 2014 of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). That landmark event, together with the successful conclusion of the First Conference of its States parties in Cancún in August, represents a milestone in our collective resolve to minimize one of the obstacles to ending the unregulated trade in conventional weapons. Nigeria signed and ratified the Treaty on 12 August 2013, the first country in Africa and the third anywhere in the world to do so, in the hope that, if robustly, effectively and non-selectively implemented, it would constitute an efficient tool and a first step towards regulating the global transfer of conventional weapons. Nigeria has already begun the process of ensuring implementation of the ATT's provisions through its review of pertinent national laws, in order to make sure that they comply with the Treaty and with other relevant international instruments for controlling the circulation of small arms and light weapons, as well as for regulating the trade in conventional weapons in general.

As of today, there are 77 States parties and 130 signatory States to the Arms Trade Treaty. In view of the watershed represented by its entry into force, and in order to highlight the efforts of all who worked so hard to achieve success for the First Conference of

States parties to the Treaty, the delegations of Mexico and Nigeria would like to introduce, on behalf of more than 60 other sponsors, draft resolution A/C.1/70/L.54, entitled "The Arms Trade Treaty". While it is still in the process of receiving further sponsorship and support, the draft resolution has already been circulated to delegations after due consultations. In view of the need to prevent and eradicate the illicit trade in conventional arms and to prevent their diversion to the illicit market or for unauthorized end use and end users, including the commission of terrorist acts, we call on all delegations to support the draft resolution.

My delegation would like to congratulate Mexico on its excellent work in the role of provisional secretariat and host of the First Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, and at the same time to take this opportunity to express our profound appreciation to the States parties for electing Nigeria to the presidency of the Second Conference of States parties, to be held in 2016. Nigeria also congratulates Switzerland, host of the Treaty's permanent secretariat, and South Africa, its interim Head. We look forward to working with other delegations to translate this vision into reality, for our future and that of our children.

Mr. Seretse (Botswana): My delegation would like to begin by thanking you, Sir, for the manner in which you are guiding the Committee's deliberations, and to assure you of our support and cooperation.

We align ourselves with the statements delivered earlier by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and Nigeria, on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/C.1/70/PV.17).

My delegation remains deeply concerned about the uncontrolled manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons across the world. As in every country, the perpetrators of criminal activities in Botswana use such weapons to commit heinous crimes, with lasting consequences for the innocent, especially women and girls. For that reason we welcome the deliberations on this agenda item, in the hope that they can lead to concrete recommendations that will facilitate better responses to the challenges posed by the illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons, including through full implementation of the provisions of the 2001 United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and, of course, all the relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

Botswana believes that the destruction of surplus, seized, collected, confiscated and forfeited weapons and ammunition could be a starting point for reducing weapon stockpiles available for illicit circulation, since it would significantly reduce the burden of managing unnecessary stockpiles. It was against that background that we noted with satisfaction the successful convening in June of the Second Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts under the Programme of Action, in which my delegation duly participated. The Meeting considered a number of issues, including the fact that new developments in the manufacturing, technology and design of small arms and light weapons, such as the use of polymer components and modular weapon systems, have significant implications for marking, record-keeping and tracing that pose challenges to implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument.

Bolstering implementation of the commitments of the Programme of Action therefore remains critical to maintaining the integrity of this process. Furthermore, we hope that implementation of Security Council resolutions, such as resolution 2220 (2015), can also help to address this problem. Needless to say, successful implementation requires that the international community work together, at the regional and subregional levels, in order to achieve the desired goals. It is against that backdrop that my delegation also welcomes the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty on 24 December 2014, as an instrument aimed at curbing and controlling the trade in and circulation of conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons.

My delegation acknowledges the necessity for nations to possess conventional arms for the legitimate protection of their territories and interests, and the maintenance of global peace and stability. We are, however, concerned that such weapons are deadly, as they cause pain and suffering with far-reaching consequences. Recent developments, such as the use of armed unmanned air vehicles and autonomous weapons, further compound this problem. It is indeed doubtful that the use of these weapons meets standards of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. We, however, welcome the discussions concerning these emerging challenges.

Finally, let me conclude by assuring you, Sir, of Botswana's constructive engagement as we continue to take stock of the status of implementation, identify

new challenges and solutions to close the existing gaps in arms control and secure international peace and security as a whole.

The Chair: I call on the representative of Belgium to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/70/L.50.

Ms. Frankinet (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): First of all, in my national capacity, I wish to say that Belgium fully endorses the statement made by the observer of the European Union (A/C.1/70/PV.16).

I would also like to speak briefly in my capacity as President of the Fourteenth Meeting of the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

(*spoke in English*)

As President of the Fourteenth Meeting of the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, it is an honour for Belgium to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/70/L.50, entitled “Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction”, together with Chile and Mozambique, respectively the future and former Presidents of the Assembly of States Parties. Let me take this opportunity to thank them.

With this draft resolution, we want to reiterate the objectives of the Convention, promote its norms and call for further universalization. We note with satisfaction that 162 States are now party to the Convention. The draft resolution also stresses the importance of the full and effective implementation of and compliance with the Convention, including through the implementation of the Maputo Action Plan.

As the draft submitted contains only very minor technical changes in comparison with the resolutions of past years, no consultations have been scheduled. In that regard, we ask you, Sir, and the membership, for your indulgence. Let me express the hope that this draft can be adopted as presented.

The Chair: We have heard from the last speaker on the cluster on conventional weapons.

In keeping with the indicative timetable for our thematic discussions, the Committee will now take up the cluster on “disarmament machinery”, starting with a panel discussion.

I warmly welcome our panellists for this cluster: the President of the Conference on Disarmament

and Permanent Representative of New Zealand, Ms. Dell Higgie; the Chairman of the United Nations Disarmament Commission and Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations, Mr. Fodé Seck; the Chairman of the Secretary-General’s Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters and President of the Centre for Democracy Public Foundation, who is also the Head of the International Centre for Democratic Transition, Mr. István Gyarmati; and the Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, Ambassador Jarmo Sareva.

We will first hear statements from our panellists. Thereafter, we will change to an informal setting for an interactive question and answer session with them. Once again, I would like to ask our panellists to kindly keep their statements short and concise.

I now give the floor to Ms. Higgie.

Ms. Higgie (New Zealand), President, Conference on Disarmament: I thank you, Sir, for the invitation to present to the Committee the 2015 report of the Conference on Disarmament. It was an honour for New Zealand to assume the final presidency of the Conference on Disarmament for 2015 and to work alongside the other five Presidents — Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Myanmar and the Netherlands — throughout the year. Through our collective experience, we can certainly attest to the fact that much time, effort and resources remain dedicated to the Conference on Disarmament.

I would like to focus my comments here today on the key aspects of this year’s report (CD/2046) as well as some observations regarding the process of its negotiation, which is in itself illustrative of some of the challenges this body faces in its operations. For the most part, my comments broadly track the flow of the report but, where logical, I have abandoned the strict order of the report in order to group various issues together.

At its outset, the report references the very many statements of support for, and concerns about, the Conference on Disarmament that were made by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and other dignitaries who addressed the Conference during its 2015 session. I understand that a record number of such statements were delivered this year, which is testament to the value that a great many States still see in the Conference on Disarmament, as well as the concern on the part of many that it has been almost 20 years since the Conference on Disarmament last fulfilled its negotiating mandate. The report also includes text drawn from a number

of statements delivered by Mr. Michael Møller, now Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, including one he delivered on behalf of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

I recall the extensive discussion that took place among members of the Conference on Disarmament about exactly how those various statements should be characterized in the report. Some members were concerned that utilizing too negative a tone in the summary might serve to further weaken the credibility of the Conference on Disarmament. Others were concerned that a more positive tone would effectively gloss over the very real challenges facing it. I note that those conflicting viewpoints — between those delegations that see the glass as half full, as it were, and those who view it as half empty, and others, indeed, who may perhaps see very little liquid in the glass at all — were equally in play during the discussion that took place on a number of elements that needed to be included in the report if it was to capture the essence of developments within the Conference on Disarmament over the year. Naturally enough, all members of the Conference on Disarmament were rightly concerned about ensuring that their point of view was reflected in the report. However, the problem was that in 2015 those viewpoints were more varied — and often antithetical — than ever.

Returning to the report now before us, I note that it also references the statement delivered by the Chair of the Advisory Board of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR). The extended reference in the report to UNIDIR is, I believe, a reflection of the esteem in which the Institute is held and the deep concern felt by States about the possibility that we might lose it as an independent resource.

Moving on to the substantive work of the Conference, the 2015 report documents the adoption of the agenda. It also records the fact that the programme of work presented for adoption by the first President of the Conference on Disarmament, Mexico, could not achieve consensus. I draw the Committee's attention to the fact — as reflected in the report — that notwithstanding Mexico's efforts and those undertaken by the four subsequent Presidents, 2015 proved to be no different from the many years preceding it. No programme of work was adopted.

Efforts to secure a programme of work were undertaken not simply by the Presidents of the

Conference on Disarmament, but also pursuant to its decision to re-establish this year an informal working group with a mandate to produce a programme of work. That informal working group met twice, and its final report, which was produced by the Chair in her personal capacity, was ultimately adopted by the Conference. That development was seen by some as a significant step in the right direction and by others as symbolic of the lowered level of ambition, which they regarded as now prevalent within the Conference on Disarmament.

In addition to its decision to re-establish the informal working group, the other decision adopted by the Conference in 2015 saw agreement, again, on a schedule of activities. That decision led to structured but informal discussions on the Conference's four core agenda items: nuclear disarmament; the ban on the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices; the prevention of an arms race in outer space; and negative security assurances. Although there are no verbatim records of any of those meetings, the respective Chairs each produced a summary report in their personal capacity. Those reports were not adopted by the Conference on Disarmament, but were formally circulated to all Conference members by the New Zealand presidency and will be attached to the final version of the report.

At this point, I would draw the attention of delegations to paragraph 20 of the report, which notes that both of the decisions I have just referred to

“were adopted by consensus notwithstanding the wide divergence of views and differing levels of support of delegations regarding ... their utility”.

Without doubt, this was the most difficult paragraph in the report on which to reach agreement, and the negotiations on it were indeed protracted and would not have been successful without a welcome spirit of flexibility. Ultimately, the text of paragraph 20 can be regarded as our best effort, collectively, to have the report reflect that, although no delegation formally moved to block consensus on either of the two decisions, those decisions were not supported by all members.

In my remaining time, I would like to touch very briefly on three other issues covered in the report before the Committee. The first of these relates to the extensive efforts undertaken by consecutive Presidents in 2015 to try to strengthen the working methods of the Conference. Unfortunately, as is evident from the fact — reflected in the report — that two separate

decisions on working methods were blocked this year, members remain divided on what, if any, change is needed and how that would best be pursued. The consequence is that it seems unlikely — at least in the medium term — that members will be able to agree to a discussion either about the substance, or application in practice, of key aspects of its rules of procedure, notwithstanding, as we all know, that the rules themselves afford considerable protection for such a discussion — including by virtue of the need for consensus to change them.

The second issue I want to touch on concerns the expansion of the Conference on Disarmament. As noted in the report, since 1982 requests for membership have been received from 27 non-members. Although the language in the report does not move us past the text on this issue of previous years, there is a reference in it to a paper forwarded from the Informal Group of Observer States, which expresses their interest in having a formal debate next year on expansion of the Conference on Disarmament.

Thirdly, with respect to the participation of civil society in the work of the Conference, I note that there is a brief reference in the report to the Conference on Disarmament-Civil Society Forum, which was organized earlier this year by the Secretary-General of the Conference. The report also reflects the announcement made this year by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom — hitherto the last civil society organization still covering the Conference — that they would be suspending their coverage of the Conference. It also records the fact that it was not possible for the Conference to reach agreement this year on any decision aimed at enhancing civil society's participation in it.

I would like to conclude by expressing New Zealand's appreciation for the support we received from all Conference on Disarmament colleagues and from our Secretariat throughout our presidency and for our primary tasks of preparing the report and resolution. We remain grateful to all for that. Alongside Nigeria, as incoming President of the Conference on Disarmament, New Zealand will remain available to any and all delegations wishing to engage over the intersessional period. We wish Nigeria and next year's other Presidents the very best for the challenging task ahead of them.

The Chair: I call on Mr. Seck.

Mr. Seck (Senegal), Chairman, United Nations Disarmament Commission (*spoke in French*): First, I would like to extend my gratitude to all members of the Disarmament Commission for the laudable efforts they made during the 2015 substantive session of the Commission in the hopes of moving our agenda forward at the beginning of the 2015-2017 cycle. Unfortunately, the state of play remains the same. As was the case for the past four cycles, our Commission was unable to agree on a new agenda this year despite the recommendations of resolution 69/77, entitled "Report of the Disarmament Commission", which re-examined the mandate of the Commission and requested that it intensify consultations with a view to reaching agreement on its agenda before the start of its 2015 substantive session, providing for focused deliberations and keeping in mind the proposal to include a third agenda item. Due to persistent divisions, the Commission could do nothing else but return to the same agenda from the previous cycle.

The draft resolution that will be submitted to the General Assembly this year (A/C.1/70/L.29) invites us to continue our reflection on the agenda items. The only difference between the new text and that of last year is paragraph 7, which notes that the Disarmament Commission encourages the Chairs of its working groups to continue, during the intersessional period, consultations on the agenda items. The text also encourages the Commission to invite the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research to prepare background papers on the items on its agenda and, if need be, other disarmament experts to present their views, upon the invitation of the Chair and with the approval of the entire Commission. We therefore encourage the full implementation of those provisions, which unfortunately could not be implemented during the 2015 session.

If we could add genuine political will to our increased efforts, we would be able to organize a collective and effective response to the challenges the Commission faces. It is in that spirit that I express the hope that the Commission will be in a position to adopt, during its upcoming sessions of the 2015-2017 cycle, specific recommendations on the issues on the agenda. To that end, on behalf of the Bureau of the Disarmament Commission, we submit draft resolution A/C.1/70/L.29, entitled "Report of the Disarmament Commission", for consideration by the First Committee

with the hope that, under the Chair's wise leadership, it will be adopted.

The Chair: I call on Mr. Gyarmati.

Mr. Gyarmati (Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters): I will start by informing members of the First Committee about the activities of the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters and the substantial discussions that we had this year, and then I will briefly discuss the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR). As Committee members know, the Advisory Board also serves as the Board of Trustees of UNIDIR, but I will not go into the details on UNIDIR because the Director of the Institute follows me on the list of speakers.

In the course of this year, the Advisory Board discussed three topics. The first was the role of arms control in managing conflict. Members of the Board noted that, while arms control had occasionally played a part in conflict-management efforts in national and international conflicts, it had never been considered conceptually as an integral part of arms control, but rather as an ad hoc measure applied on a case-by-case basis. It noted further that although arms control had not been part of United Nations peacekeeping mission mandates, its use has been implicit. In the past, arms control has been part of a number of peacekeeping operations, the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Dayton Agreement, being the most prominent example.

The Advisory Board also observed that there were interesting and new arms-control measures in the context of the mandate of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe mission in Ukraine. The Vienna Document on Confidence and Security-Building Measures was extensively used, and the Minsk arrangements had mandated the mission to facilitate, monitor and verify the withdrawal of heavy weapons.

This year, the Board also decided to make some very concrete recommendations, including the following. First, it was recommended that a study by UNIDIR to chart and assess the history of arms control measures in peacekeeping activities, in particular peacekeeping missions of the United Nations and regional organizations, be commissioned. Based on that assessment, UNIDIR would prepare a handbook of measures implemented by peacekeeping missions for the United Nations and regional organizations. Secondly, training on weapons control and disarmament

should be included in the preparation of relevant United Nations missions. Thirdly, weapons-control and disarmament experts should be part of the team of experts on peacekeeping missions. And fourthly, the United Nations Office on Disarmament Affairs should be asked to provide comments and recommendations on the mandates of United Nations missions.

The second topic was new challenges to disarmament by the increasing role of non-State actors. The Board has attempted to identify the inherent problem involving non-State actors and disarmament. In addressing the topic it noted that the role of non-State actors in security matters had expanded worldwide since the end of the Cold War. The Advisory Board also underlined that the most deadly contemporary conflicts and incidents of homicide were those involving non-State actors and that small arms and light weapons were the principal tool in these events. The Board suggested that a broader and more inclusive and strategic approach to non-State actors would be required. In this regard, it noted that international civil society organizations have provided exceptional leadership in a number of areas of disarmament.

Under "Recommendations", the Board recommended the creation of a United Nations body that, in the light of principles enunciated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, would regularly monitor and report upon the following: materials contained in officially sanctioned school textbooks that purport to demonize people on the basis of race, religion, nationality or gender; speeches by national leaders that seek to inspire hatred against other States or those within their respective States; utterances in public and social media that seek to foster racial, ethnic, gender, cultural, religious or other discrimination, division or hatred; and indicators of radicalization and extremism. Furthermore, the Secretary-General calls on the international community and regional organizations to strengthen early warning of hate speech and organized activities designed to provoke sectarian or extremist agendas. He also encourages States to conduct a national assessment of risks related to extremism and radicalization. Finally, he seeks to empower and strengthen the capacity of the Human Rights Council to undertake periodic review of Member States that are vulnerable to and/or complicit in the promotion of extremist groups and agendas.

The third topic was the humanitarian consequences of nuclear use. The Advisory Board acknowledged

that the debate over the humanitarian impact of the use of nuclear weapons had gained traction in international forums and became a prominent issue in the global discussion on nuclear weapons and nuclear disarmament. We also noted that the debate had moved from a purely like-minded initiative to an issue of broad interest, for instance, in the discussions at the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Members of the Board examined questions relating to the applicability of the humanitarian approach to nuclear disarmament and, to that end, discussed the precedents set in Ottawa and Oslo with respect to like-minded processes of land mines and cluster munitions.

The Board made the following recommendations. First, it underscored the importance of the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Secondly, it noted that the humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons would have to be further studied and recommended that a study be undertaken to this effect. Thirdly, the Board recommended that nuclear-weapon States increase information and transparency on security measures they implement in order to provide assurances on their efforts to limit the risks. Benchmarking and peer review could be useful additional measures, taking into account the national security concerns associated with transparency of nuclear-weapon safety and security. Finally, the Board recommended the initiation of a discussion in the relevant forums of how nuclear deterrence does and could take into account humanitarian concerns.

With respect to UNIDIR, from our perspective as the Institute's Board of Trustees, one year ago, when I reported to the First Committee the very difficult situation UNIDIR was in, I reported on two groups of outstanding, open issues that were a cause for concern (see A/C.1/69/PV.9). The first set of issues was UNIDIR's financial problems, which I do not need to detail here. The second set of issues were administrative in nature, such as the status of the personnel and other related questions.

I am very happy to report that while we have made progress in the first group, we have basically been able to resolve all outstanding issues in the second group as well. The administrative problems of UNIDIR have therefore been resolved, thanks to the very serious efforts of the Secretary-General, who was personally involved in this process, and his very helpful staff, namely, Mr. Kim Won-soo and Ms. Susana Malcorra. I

just wanted to take this opportunity to thank them and others who have been involved in this process, because we can now safely say that UNIDIR's future is not threatened by these administrative issues.

Last but not least, I want to thank the Director of UNIDIR, Mr. Jarmo Sareva, who was ready to take up the directorship in a situation whose outlook was extremely bleak. And now, a year later, the situation, thanks, to a large extent, to his efforts, has improved, and UNIDIR's future seems much brighter. Hopefully at the end of the year we will be almost completely certain that UNIDIR will continue to serve the United Nations as it has done until now, or even better.

The Chair: I now give the floor to Mr. Sareva.

Mr. Sareva (United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research): It is a pleasure to be back at the First Committee.

I wish that I could focus in this statement on the substantive work that the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) has been conducting. There has indeed been a great deal of substantive work done, despite the many difficulties that the Institute has been facing. I sincerely hope that 2015 and the seventieth session of the General Assembly and the First Committee will be the last when the Director of UNIDIR, the Chair of the Advisory Board and our staff focus their, and Committee members', attention so much on the financial situation of UNIDIR.

I will run very quickly through the challenges that UNIDIR has been facing, the situation as it is, despite the fact that we have been repeating this time and again in Geneva and here.

First of all, there has been a contraction over many years in unearmarked funding from Member States for UNIDIR's core institutional or operational activities. These costs arise mostly from core staff salaries and include some charges that we need to pay to the United Nations for such services as informational technology support.

Secondly, it has become increasingly difficult for Member States to justify to their treasuries that taxpayer funds should be available for institutional uses of this kind. This is a global trend that goes back at least 10 years.

Thirdly, the financial crisis faced by most Governments means that the overall amount of funds

available is reduced and that there is a preference for funding activities, i.e., projects, as opposed to offering general support. Non-governmental donors such as major foundations also fund projects, not core activities.

Fourthly, this trend has been exacerbated by the decline in real terms of the subvention from the regular budget of the United Nations. Just to put it in dollar terms, 25 years ago the subvention was \$220,000 annually. Now it is still less than \$290,000. In 25 years, there has been an increase of about \$70,000 and, at the same time, the United States dollar has greatly declined in value vis-à-vis the Swiss franc. Our activities are mostly based in the Swiss currency. The fact that the subvention has declined in real value is a problem of which Member States have long been aware.

On top of the impact of the dwindling contributions from both the United Nations regular budget — by the subvention — and unearmarked contributions from Member States for core costs, there is the need to meet additional costs as of 1 November of this year, stemming from Umoja, and the full implementation of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS). However, Member States — and I commend them — have continued to invest in UNIDIR's projects and activities by earmarked project funding, demonstrating a continued demand for and interest in UNIDIR's work.

Now, I will run quickly through the activities that have been undertaken to overcome this convergence of challenges.

First of all, the operations budget has been reduced over the years by outsourcing all non-critical institutional functions, that is, those that can be conducted by other service providers, resulting in the loss of four and a half full-time positions. Secondly, to further reduce costs, in 2011, the Deputy-Director position was downgraded from a D-1 to the P-5 level. Support services, including information technology, communications and publications, have been outsourced or discontinued. Thirdly, UNIDIR established a revolving capital fund, the Stability Fund, in order to meet the liquidity requirements to operate within Umoja.

Next, in response to client needs, their funding priorities and new opportunities offered by new technologies, UNIDIR has modified its products — fewer books, more short analysis, more concrete tools.

Next, my predecessor attempted an alternative staffing and organizational structure to address the need to have in-house expertise to generate new funding proposals and build networks, but this model, unfortunately, proved to be financially unsustainable, and I have decided to abandon it. Furthermore, we have actively raised Member States' awareness about the challenges and the unsustainable nature of the current situation via the annual report of the Director, the reports of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters, in meetings of the Friends of UNIDIR group convened and hosted by France — I wish to commend France for the role it has played — and in regular briefings by the Director in Geneva and in New York, and, of course, in bilateral briefings.

Member States have rallied to support UNIDIR with contributions to the Stability Fund and new support for the institutional operations budget or core unearmarked funding. Australia and Switzerland have both made significant contributions to the Stability Fund. Member States have also been vocal in their support for the Institute in their annual formal statements to the First Committee. I wish to thank Member States that have done so for that support and that provided through the quinquennial resolution to the General Assembly. For me personally, all this support in economically challenging times for our donors has been a humbling experience.

Next, UNIDIR's Board of Trustees has made representations to the Secretary-General and, in this regard, I would like to thank the Chairman of our Board, Ambassador István Gyarmati, for his strong support and leadership. The High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, both Ms. Kane and Mr. Kim, and the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva and other high-ranking officials within the Secretariat have been active as well. Furthermore, continuous representations have been made to relevant parts of the United Nations system, including the Budget Division and the various services of the United Nations Office at Geneva.

Finally, going further back in time, the Office of Internal Oversight Services, back in 2005, issued an audit report recommending that UNIDIR, with the support of its Board, "seek enhanced financial support from the regular budget". There are three sources of funds for our operational costs: first, unearmarked contributions from Member States, and I have already noted that the trend has been an declining one and I

do not see a reverse in the making; secondly, overhead charges on project budgets, and here we have reached a certain limit in the sense that Member States, our donors, are not able to provide any higher overhead than they currently do; and thirdly, the subvention from the regular budget.

The aim of increasing the subvention from the United Nations regular budget through the Fifth Committee would be to offset the decline in the subvention's original purchasing power. I already gave a figure to help understand how much it has actually declined. Such an offset would cover the cost of most of the Institute's core staff. However, we fully recognize that our statute has also established a ceiling for the subvention.

With the strong backing of our Board and the senior management of the Organization, we have been trying to resolve the major challenges arising from Umoja and IPSAS. As we just heard from the Chair of our Board, many, if not most, of these issues have been resolved. I am extremely grateful to the Secretariat, including to the Department of Management, for having demonstrated flexibility and common sense in applying both new and old policies and rules.

In this regard, I am happy to note that just yesterday Ambassador Gyarmati and I were informed by the United Nations Controller that contrary to earlier advice UNIDIR will continue to be included in Volume I of the United Nations Board of Auditors annual audit reports. For the First Committee, this does not say much, but in concrete and practical terms, what it means is that we will, for now at least, avoid the high cost of preparing our financial reports and going through a separate audit.

In the past three years, fewer than 20 States have contributed to UNIDIR through un earmarked contributions. In 2014, these totalled about \$475,000. In 2015, core costs are exceeding \$1 million. The higher subvention would therefore be an essential component of a sustainable and longer-term solution.

I realize that my 10 minutes will have soon elapsed. I would therefore close by thanking UNIDIR's supporters, both large and small, for their contributions and their political support. Even small contributions to our budget, especially from countries that lack substantial means, is extremely important. It signifies their commitment to UNIDIR, its statute and its mandate given under the auspices of the first special session of

the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Without them, our donors, we would not exist.

In closing, I would also like to thank UNIDIR's staff. Many of them have served with the Institute for a long time, always with dedication and integrity and on outdated and irregular contracts that offered few benefits. Luckily, these have been phased out. It may sound like a cliché to say that an organization's greatest asset is its personnel, but in UNIDIR's case, with little else than the generosity of its donors and the dedication of its staff, it is certainly not a cliché.

The Chair: I will now suspend the meeting for an informal question-and-answer session with the panellists.

The meeting was suspended at 4.10 p.m. and resumed at 4.15 p.m.

The Chair: On behalf of all delegations, I would like to thank our panellists for their statements.

I now call on speakers on our rolling list for the disarmament machinery cluster.

Mr. Primasto (Indonesia): I am honoured to take the floor on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) to make a statement on the disarmament machinery.

NAM remains concerned at the continuous erosion of multilateralism in the fields of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. The Movement is determined to continue promoting multilateralism as the core principle of negotiations in these areas and as the only sustainable approach to address these issues, in accordance with the United Nations Charter.

NAM underscores the importance of the multilateral disarmament machinery, consisting of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) as the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament, the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) as a universal deliberative body and subsidiary organ of the General Assembly, and the First Committee. NAM stresses the preserving and strengthening of the nature, role and purpose of each part of this machinery.

Enhancing the effectiveness of the United Nations disarmament machinery is a shared objective. Based on its existing rules of procedure and methods of work, this machinery has produced landmark treaties and guidelines. NAM believes that the main difficulty lies in the lack of political will by some States to achieve progress, particularly on nuclear disarmament.

NAM reaffirms the importance of the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament and reiterates its call on the CD to agree by consensus on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work without any further delay, taking into account the security interests of all States. In this regard, the Movement reaffirms the importance of the principle contained in the final document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-I) that the adoption of disarmament measures should take place in such an equitable and balanced manner as to safeguard the right of each State to security and to ensure that no individual State or group of States may obtain advantages over others at any stage.

While welcoming the efforts made during the 2015 session of the Conference on Disarmament on its programme of work, pursuant to the Conference's decision contained in document CD/2022 designed to re-establish an informal working group of the CD, NAM notes the deliberations of the informal working group in its meetings during the CD's 2015 session. NAM also takes note of the structured informal discussions on its agenda items held during the CD's 2015 session in accordance with the Schedule of Activities contained in document CD/2021. The Movement encourages all States to demonstrate the necessary political will for the CD to be able to fulfil its negotiating mandate.

To instil a fresh impetus to global nuclear disarmament efforts, NAM calls for the urgent commencement of negotiations in the CD towards the early conclusion of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons, which prohibits their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use, and provides for their destruction, as called for in resolution 69/58, submitted by the Movement. NAM supports the working paper submitted by Indonesia on behalf of the Member States of the Group of 21 on the follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament contained in document CD/2032.

Regarding the UNDC, NAM expresses regret that the Commission has been unable to reach agreement on any recommendations since 2000 due to the lack of political will and inflexible positions of some nuclear-weapon States, despite the Movement's constructive role and concrete proposals throughout deliberations, especially in the working group on recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and

the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. NAM calls upon States Members of the United Nations to display the necessary political will and flexibility to enable the Commission to agree on substantive outcomes in its present cycle.

For its part, NAM stands ready to engage constructively on the advancement of the issues on the United Nations disarmament agenda and the ways and means of strengthening the disarmament machinery. NAM reaffirms that a fourth special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament remains the most appropriate forum for furthering the priorities established by SSOD-I.

NAM stresses that the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research should be adequately strengthened and its research and information functions accordingly extended, as provided for in the final document of SSOD-I.

This year, the Movement is once again submitting the draft resolution entitled "Promotion of multilateralism in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation" (A/C.1/70/L.9) and a draft decision on the open-ended working group on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. The Movement once again seeks the support of all Member States for the adoption of the aforementioned draft resolution and draft decision without a vote.

Since the display of political will is fundamental to an effective performance by the disarmament machinery, NAM urges all countries to work together, cooperate further and tangibly demonstrate their commitment to ensuring that the disarmament machinery will once again and in a not-too-distant future unleash its potential to advance peace and security for the entire world.

Ms. Moyano (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the States members of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR).

The efforts made by the international community to promote international peace and security require a strong multilateral United Nations mechanism dedicated to issues of disarmament and non-proliferation. In that regard, UNASUR reiterates its commitment to the mechanism established by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, in 1978, which introduced a set of bodies with different but complementary roles, constituting what it is known

as the United Nations disarmament machinery, with the aim of strengthening the role of the Organization in the areas of disarmament and non-proliferation.

Accordingly, UNASUR wishes to highlight the mechanism's achievements as reflected in various international instruments that constitute such important milestones in international law as the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Chemical Weapons Convention. UNASUR believes that any attempt to reform the multilateral disarmament machinery should be undertaken in a comprehensive manner and within the framework of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

We are very concerned that for the last 17 years the member States of the Conference on Disarmament, the sole forum for multilateral negotiations on disarmament, have failed to reach agreement on a programme of work for substantively dealing with the items on Conference's agenda. UNASUR urges all members of the Conference on Disarmament to show greater political willingness to begin substantive work by adopting and implementing a comprehensive and balanced programme of work, with the goal of starting negotiations and making progress with the items on its agenda, especially those related to nuclear disarmament.

In that regard, UNASUR welcomes the establishment within the Conference of an informal working group, co-chaired by Finland, with a mandate to produce a solid and progressive programme of work. We call on the Conference on Disarmament to overcome its prolonged impasse and establish an ad-hoc committee on nuclear disarmament with the aim of launching negotiations on a nuclear weapons convention.

Here we would like to recall the words of the Secretary-General's message to the Conference on Disarmament, delivered by the Conference's Acting Secretary-General in January 2015, which stated that

“the international community simply cannot afford a Conference on Disarmament that does not help us move towards the goal of a safer world”.

He also reminded the Conference that its mandate is to negotiate and that ultimately its effectiveness will be judged on a single criterion — its ability to conclude disarmament treaties.

In that context, we reiterate our support for the Secretary-General's five-point proposal on nuclear disarmament and for a nuclear weapons convention

backed by a strong verification system. UNASUR believes that such a convention should be negotiated within the existing multilateral system, either in the Conference on Disarmament or, if that is impossible, in the General Assembly. We believe firmly that the only guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is their total elimination. Until that goal is met, the non-nuclear-weapon States should receive unequivocal, unconditional and legally binding guarantees against any use or threat of use of nuclear weapons by nuclear States.

Another provisional measure would be the negotiation of a multilateral, non-discriminatory treaty on fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices that would include the basis for an international verification regime and comply with the goals of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.

We note with concern the possibility of an arms race in outer space and therefore reaffirm the importance of negotiating a legally binding instrument for that area, in order to prevent the deployment of weapons in space. We would also like to reiterate the importance we attach to strict compliance with the current regime on the use of outer space, which recognizes the common interest of humankind in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes.

Ms. Stoeva (Bulgaria), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

While we acknowledge the efforts of Ambassador Fodé Seck of Senegal, Chair of the Disarmament Commission for its 2015 substantive session, to reach agreement on the agenda for the three-year cycle, UNASUR deplores the lack of progress in the Disarmament Commission and the fact that its Working Groups on disarmament, the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and practical confidence-building measures in the area of conventional weapons have made no substantive recommendations. We hope that the Commission's 2016 session can generate greater political will, flexibility and cooperation on the part of all States. In that regard, UNASUR calls on Member States to make every possible effort to enable this United Nations deliberative body to produce substantive recommendations on disarmament issues.

Lastly, UNASUR would like to highlight the work carried out by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research as an autonomous body founded to conduct independent research on disarmament and related issues and to promote States'

informed participation in disarmament efforts. We also acknowledge the importance of improving civil society's interaction and participation in disarmament and non-proliferation efforts.

Mr. Mahfouz (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Arab Republic of Egypt has the honour to speak today on behalf of the members of the Group of Arab States.

At the outset, I would like to express the Group's support for the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

The Arab Group's affirmation of the universality of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is inextricably linked to its principled commitment to nuclear disarmament as its top priority in the effort to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons, as endorsed by the General Assembly in 1978 at its tenth special session, devoted to disarmament. We recall that the United Nations disarmament machinery is based solely on the outcomes of the special sessions on disarmament and cannot be amended except at a new special session of the Assembly dedicated to that purpose.

We therefore support the position of NAM, which for years has called for the convening of a fourth special session on disarmament. In the light of the fact that the issues of disarmament and non-proliferation, especially regarding nuclear weapons, have witnessed numerous setbacks during the period between the previous special session, in 1988, and the present day, it is incumbent on us to launch a comprehensive review of the United Nations disarmament machinery and to modernize it as soon as possible through a new special session. In that regard, the Arab Group calls on all Member States to engage constructively with a view to achieving an international consensus on the objectives and agenda of a new special session.

While the Arab Group commends the efforts of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) during its 2015 session, we must once again reiterate the importance of enabling the Conference, as the sole United Nations negotiating forum in the area of disarmament, to perform its functions. We also affirm that the current stalemate in the work of the Conference is not due to any shortcomings in the Conference's machinery but rather to a lack of political will on the part of the States within the Conference. The Group of Arab States emphasizes the need to preserve the CD's major role.

The four issues on the Conference's agenda — nuclear disarmament, a fissile material cut-off treaty, the prevention of an arms race in outer space and negative security assurances, which are all interrelated and consistent with objectives in that regard — are part of a comprehensive approach to nuclear disarmament, and no single issue should take precedence over the others. For example, no topic should be dealt with from a non-proliferation perspective at the expense of a comprehensive approach. That also applies to proposals for a fissile material cut-off treaty, which should also deal with the problem of nuclear States' accumulated stockpiles of such material.

The Group of Arab States is disappointed by the fact that the Disarmament Commission has failed to achieve a consensus on any recommendations since 2000, owing to a lack of political will and the inflexible positions taken by some nuclear-weapon States, which frankly have blocked consensus in the forum. The Arab Group has worked very hard to arrive at a consensus result and has played a constructive role, especially in the context of multilateral efforts to achieve the goals of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The Group therefore reiterates the need for nuclear-weapon States in particular to display the political will and flexibility that is needed to enable the Disarmament Commission to agree on substantive conclusions during its current session, especially on the priority issue of nuclear disarmament.

The Acting Chair: I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Kos (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; the European Free Trade Association country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

We strongly support the United Nations and effective multilateralism. The role and contribution of the United Nations disarmament machinery, whose components are mutually reinforcing, remain crucial and irreplaceable. The deliberative and negotiating bodies set up under the auspices of the General Assembly

at its first special session devoted to disarmament must improve their performance and achieve results in line with their established mandates. As we pursue that agenda, it is essential and urgent that we continue to focus on enhancing the role, authority, effectiveness and efficiency of the General Assembly and its First Committee.

There are practical steps that we can consider with a view to improving the Committee's practices and working methods and making it more effective. We believe that it should serve as a forum for open and relevant exchange, able to deal with current challenges to our collective security and to develop concrete measures to that end. It should concentrate its efforts on the most pertinent and topical issues. Many of its resolutions are repetitive, and we should examine the possibility of considering them at longer intervals, in a balanced manner, in order to alleviate pressure on the Committee's heavy agenda. We welcome and support the Chair's efforts in that regard.

In accordance with its mandate, the Conference on Disarmament (CD) has the crucial job of negotiating multilateral disarmament treaties. We are concerned about the fact that it has once again failed to agree on a programme of work or to begin negotiations. As it continues to seek a path to renewed negotiations, the re-establishment of an informal working group aimed at helping to develop a programme of work has provided a useful opportunity for exploring new avenues, and we commend the co-Chair for her efforts in that regard. The structured and substantive discussions on the four core items on the schedule of activities, as well as the additional meetings held under the Netherlands presidency, enabled some in-depth exchanges, particularly during the meetings devoted to a fissile material cut-off treaty and the prevention of an arms race in outer space, coordinated by Germany and the United Kingdom, respectively.

We reiterate our long-standing commitment to enlarging the CD. We underline the importance of continuing consultations on expanding its membership and strongly support holding a formal discussion on the issue, as requested by observer States, as well as the appointment of a special coordinator for this. We welcome the enhanced interaction between civil society and the CD and hope that further steps can be taken in future to increase the contribution of non-governmental organizations and research institutions to the work of the Conference in an inclusive manner.

One of the EU's clear priorities continues to be ensuring that negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament begin immediately and conclude as soon as possible on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, based on document CD/1299 and the mandate it contains. We call on all CD member States to start negotiations on such a treaty without delay and to begin work on the other issues on its agenda, in line with its adopted programme of work contained in document CD/1864. We call on all States possessing nuclear weapons that have not already done so to declare and uphold an immediate moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

We welcome the report (A/70/81) of the Group of Governmental Experts to make recommendations on possible aspects that could contribute to but not negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. It reflects the various views and identifies areas of convergence and divergence on key aspects of a possible treaty, and should serve as a useful guide in bringing the Conference on Disarmament closer to future negotiations on an important issue.

We recognize the important role that the United Nations Disarmament Commission is designed to play as a deliberative body of the General Assembly on disarmament matters, established by the Assembly at its first special session devoted to disarmament. Regrettably, since 1999, it has not been able to fulfil its mandate or deliver results. This year's session marked the beginning of a new three-year cycle. We supported the need for a more focused agenda, which in our view could provide room for consensus recommendations and enable the Commission to once again assume its designated role. We also supported expanding its agenda, which could create conditions conducive to overcoming the existing deadlock and enable the Commission to discuss new developments in the field of international security and disarmament.

Lastly, we would like to underline the importance of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) as a stand-alone, autonomous institution of the disarmament machinery. For 35 years, UNIDIR has supported the international community with independent, in-depth research on security issues and the prospects for disarmament and non-proliferation. The EU and its member States have

supported its important work on numerous occasions, including financially. We are very worried about the Institution's current difficulties. Finding a solution to them will be crucial if we are to enable UNIDIR to strengthen its management and financial stability and continue to carry out its mandate in fulfilling Member States' expectations and facilitating progress on disarmament efforts.

Mr. Ait Abdeslam (Algeria): Algeria fully associates itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and Egypt, on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

Algeria is firmly committed to the multilateral disarmament agenda and to strengthening the disarmament machinery. Given the impasse at which the relevant mechanisms find themselves, it is vital that Member States demonstrate the political will needed to effectively and sustainably revitalize the United Nations disarmament bodies. In that context, it is important to ensure that the nature, role and mandate of each component of the disarmament machinery is preserved while improving their effectiveness. While each component is facing similar challenges, it is a fact that the main difficulty lies in the lack of political will on the part of some Member States to achieve progress and concrete results.

Despite the fact that the Disarmament Commission has been unable to adopt concrete recommendations for a number of years, Algeria wishes to reaffirm its commitment to the Commission's mandate as the sole specialized and universal deliberative body of the United Nations disarmament machinery. We therefore continue to fully support the work of the Commission and call on all Member States to demonstrate the political will and flexibility needed to enable it to make concrete recommendations on the issues on its agenda for the current cycle.

Algeria also greatly values the Conference on Disarmament (CD). Given the critical importance of the issues on its agenda, we are deeply concerned about the lack of consensus on its adoption of a comprehensive and balanced programme of work. The current deadlock is particularly damaging to the interests of non-nuclear-weapon States. We believe that the stalemate cannot be attributed to an intrinsic failure of this institutional mechanism, nor is it inherent in its mode of operation. Furthermore, it cannot be attributed either to its rules

of procedure, including the rule of consensus, or to the CD's agenda. In fact, the consensus rule is a way to protect the national security interests of all Member States, not just the most powerful. It should also be noted that the CD has made valuable contributions to multilateral disarmament. But it cannot resume its substantive work unless its Member States demonstrate the political will needed to achieve collective solutions that can enable them to handle the real challenges that exist to the security of all.

We believe that the CD has the capacity to break the deadlock if all the States members of the Conference can display the political will needed to make progress on the issue of global nuclear disarmament. We also continue to believe that the best illustration of the CD's capacity to reach a compromise among its members was its adoption by consensus in May 2009, under the presidency of Algeria, of decision CD/1864 on the establishment of a programme of work.

At the same time, while we welcome the efforts made during the CD's 2015 session, particularly its adoption of decision CD/2022 on re-establishing an informal working group on the programme of work, Algeria reaffirms the importance of the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral negotiating body for disarmament. Algeria stands ready to engage constructively with all Member States on the United Nations disarmament agenda, as well as on ways and means of revitalizing and strengthening the disarmament machinery. In that regard, we reiterate our support for convening a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament aimed at thoroughly reviewing all disarmament issues and reaffirming the vocation of the Organization's disarmament machinery.

My delegation also recognizes the contribution and relevant support that the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) provides to Member States. UNIDIR was established by the General Assembly at its first special session devoted to disarmament, and Algeria wishes to express its support to UNIDIR as an autonomous institution devoted to conducting independent research on disarmament and related issues.

Finally, Algeria reaffirms the need to further strengthen the dialogue and cooperation among the First Committee, the Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament.

Ms. Janjua (Pakistan): Pakistan aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. We would also like to take this opportunity to align ourselves with the statement to be delivered later by the representative of the Russian Federation on behalf of a number of interested countries in support of the Conference on Disarmament (CD).

The shared quest to control, regulate and eventually reduce conventional and non-conventional arms has always required agreed and effective negotiating mechanisms. Accordingly, the most consequential and consensual architecture for negotiating conventions and treaties in the area of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation was finally created by the United Nations in the last century. The United Nations disarmament machinery, as we know it, was created by the General Assembly at its first special session on disarmament (SSOD-I), 37 years ago. The key requirement set forth at SSOD-I relating to that machinery is that

“[t]he adoption of disarmament measures should take place in such an equitable and balanced manner as to ensure the right of each State to security and to ensure that no individual State or group of States may obtain advantages over others at any stage” (S/10-2, *para.* 29).

The primary purpose of creating the CD was nuclear disarmament, an agenda item on which no progress has been allowed by some major Powers for the past 32 years. The leading critics of the CD are themselves responsible for dragging their feet on the most important issues of nuclear disarmament, negative security assurances and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Those countries have also played a major role in ensuring that the CD has remained inactive for decades and in stalling deliberations in the Disarmament Commission. Their self-centred concerns are limited to progress on a single issue in the CD, with no interest in the other three core issues on its agenda.

The challenges facing the international disarmament agenda and machinery are not exclusive to the CD, however. In the past 10 years, several measures have been taken to rationalize and improve the methods of work of the First Committee. Their primary goals were achieving efficiency, effectiveness and results, and for more than a decade, the Committee has pursued a more streamlined agenda. Yet despite all those efficiency-

driven measures, the level of the First Committee’s effectiveness, authority and results is obvious. The facts would suggest that as far as the First Committee is concerned, the disarmament agenda and machinery are at just as much of a standstill as they are in the CD. More importantly, the changes in working methods have not led to results on substance, either — that is, progress on the priority issue of nuclear disarmament.

Similarly, the Disarmament Commission has not been able to agree on any recommendations or guidelines for more than a decade and half. The differences in perceptions and priorities among member States have been so deep that at times the Commission has not been able even to agree on the wording of its nuclear agenda item.

While of course there is always room for improvement, the real challenge, in our view, is how to deal with the political dynamics and developments outside the conference rooms of the United Nations. It is clear that other parts of the disarmament machinery are dealing with similar difficulties. We would like to take this opportunity to reiterate that the problems facing the disarmament machinery are not organizational or procedural. They relate to the external political environment, which affects our forums.

In order to make progress in the CD and other parts of the disarmament machinery, it is essential to take into account the security concerns of all States. Recognizing and addressing those concerns is the only way to unblock the CD and revitalize the machinery. No treaty has ever been agreed on by the negotiating States, nor will it be, unless their legitimate security concerns are accommodated. Moreover, the discriminatory nuclear cooperation policies pursued by some major Powers have created insecurities and imbalances. By undermining international non-proliferation norms in pursuit of power and profit, such policies have accentuated the asymmetry in fissile material stocks in South Asia.

Regrettably, such discriminatory policies continue and have found no opposition among the members of the Nuclear Suppliers’ Group, which is composed of some of the most ardent supporters of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and some of the strongest critics of the so-called lack of progress in the CD. That is why Pakistan has been obliged to take a stand against nuclear selectivity, discrimination and exceptionalism. No country can be

expected to compromise on its fundamental security interests for an instrument that is cost-free for all other concerned countries.

Some have chosen to portray ill-conceived efforts — such as the establishment of the Group of Governmental Experts to make recommendations on possible aspects that could contribute to but not negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices — as a major step forward. On the contrary, such attempts betray only a false sense of progress. We wish to reiterate that such measures are contrary to the recognized consensus international position that the CD is the sole multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament. The Group of Governmental Experts has simply duplicated the CD's work in a non-inclusive manner. Despite the claims for consensus in its report (see A/70/81), the Group failed to produce any consensus recommendations of any substance.

As we have stated before, changing the forum or format will not overcome the fundamental obstructions, which is why the temptation, however well-meaning, to seek options outside the CD for at least some, if not all, of the issues on its agenda is ill-advised. Pakistan does not support weakening the CD's role through General Assembly-led non-universal processes that are divisive and not agreed on by consensus.

It is a matter of satisfaction that after several years of stalemate, since 2014 the CD has agreed on a schedule of activities involving substantive discussions on all its agenda items in a balanced and equitable manner. While such discussions do not amount to negotiations or pre-negotiations, in our view they have proved useful in highlighting the various aspects of each agenda item and further strengthening our conviction that the Conference on Disarmament is the appropriate venue for holding such discussions. Pakistan has participated actively in the discussions and has made substantive contributions on the issue of fissile material.

Despite our firm belief that the CD's deadlock is completely unrelated to its working methods, Pakistan was ready to join the consensus on the adoption of a decision establishing an Informal Working Group to review the CD's methods of work. Even as we are willing to work with other members of the Conference on Disarmament in order to examine concrete proposals for its reform, we wish to underline that simply changing the working methods, even by amending the consensus

rule or extending the tenure of the presidents, would not affect the national security calculus of States, based on which they take the positions that they do in the Conference.

Pakistan strongly believes in the need for preserving all the components of the disarmament machinery that have been developed with consensus. Any effort to bypass or weaken that machinery would undermine consensus and legitimacy. Pakistan would not be part of any such efforts. Instead of selective and partial solutions aimed at strengthening the disarmament machinery, Pakistan calls for the development of a new and balanced consensus to deal with the present stalemate in the mechanisms and modalities of promoting global peace and security as well as in advancing disarmament negotiations.

Pakistan fully supports the long-standing call of the Non-Aligned Movement, which comprises almost two thirds of the United Nations membership, to convene the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

Finally, it is incumbent on all Member States, in particular the major Powers, to demonstrate the necessary political will, as well as the commitment to respect the security concerns of all States, in order for us to make progress and unblock the United Nations disarmament machinery. Pakistan stands ready to do so.

The Acting Chair: I wish to remind delegations that they should limit their interventions to five minutes when speaking in their national capacity.

Mr. Purevdorj (Mongolia): Mongolia has always considered disarmament in all its aspects to be one of the priorities of multilateral diplomacy for the reason that disarmament is fundamental to global peace and security. Given its commitment and willingness to contribute to arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation, Mongolia is genuinely concerned about the ongoing stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament, as well as the continued failure of the United Nations Disarmament Commission to deliver recommendations on issues of disarmament and non-proliferation.

Despite the protracted deadlock, the international community continues to have faith in us, the members of these bodies, and urges us to resume substantive work and deliver on our mandate. It is therefore time to demonstrate the necessary political will and take

concrete actions to make progress. As Ambassador Dell Higginson of New Zealand reported, in her capacity as President of the Conference on Disarmament this year, Conference members continued their efforts to move forward the work of the Conference. For instance, the Conference re-established the informal working group to discuss possible options for developing a programme of work, and also conducted a series of informal discussions on each agenda item according to the schedule of activities of the Conference.

Although the Conference on Disarmament is not mandated to deliberate, my delegation believes that such structured and substantive discussions on the core agenda items would also be helpful in terms of building common ground and may eventually facilitate the path towards renewed negotiations. With that in mind, during the Mongolian presidency of the Conference this year, we convened formal plenary meetings to have focused discussions on the four core issues: nuclear disarmament, a fissile material cut-off treaty, the prevention of an arms race in outer space, and negative security assurance. In that context, I would like to underline that we need to ensure continuity and an outcome-oriented approach in our structured discussions in the Conference on Disarmament.

This year, the successive Presidents of the Conference have also conducted consultations with Member States on the proposals on the issues of improving the functioning of the Conference and possibly changing its methods of work. Although the Conference has not been able to produce tangible results on those issues, it was a useful exercise in terms of exchanging views on different aspects. My delegation considers it important that the Conference on Disarmament continue its efforts to explore the possibility of ensuring the improved and effective functioning of the Conference with a view to overcoming its current impasse. In that connection, my delegation would like to commend the initiative and successful hosting of the Informal Conference on Disarmament — Civil Society Forum, held on March 19 by the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones is a positive step and an important measure towards strengthening global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. Thus, while promoting its nuclear-weapon-free status, Mongolia believes that the existing zones need to be strengthened and that measures ought to be taken to promote the establishment

of new zones, including in the Middle East and northeast Asia. In that connection, Mongolia welcomes resolution 69/66, which made it possible to convene the third Conference of States Parties and Signatories to Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia this year in New York. I would like to take this opportunity to commend Indonesia, the President of the Conference, for its commitment and dedication to make the Conference a successful event.

I wish to say a few words on our draft resolution, entitled “Permanent neutrality of Mongolia”. As is known, my delegation had two informal consultations on the draft on 14 and 19 October, respectively, in addition to numerous bilateral meetings. The text of the draft resolution has been by and large agreed. However, some delegations requested more time to study it. Having consulted with my capital and the sponsors of the draft, my delegation has decided to temporarily postpone the submission of the draft resolution. We intend to take it up next May in the plenary of the General Assembly. My delegation wishes to express its profound gratitude to all other delegations, particularly the sponsors, for their understanding and continued support.

Let me conclude by reiterating Mongolia’s sincere hope that the intergovernmental “disarmament machinery” will be able to bring an end to this stalemate and begin once again to deliver on its mandate.

The Acting Chair: I call on the representative of France to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/70/L.30.

Ms. Guitton (France) (*spoke in French*): France aligns itself with the statement of the European Union. Please allow me to deliver an abridged version of the additional remarks I wish to make in my national capacity. The full version of my statement will be available on our website, *France Désarmement*.

The disarmament machinery aims to organize and implement multilateral action that should embody a shared determination to build a safer world. France remains committed to the disarmament machinery and its institutions, as established by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Despite contrasting situations, those institutions provide us with a solid framework that remains vital for any progress in the area of disarmament.

The First Committee plays a key role, as it provides a forum in which each Member State can share its vision and set out its position on disarmament and international

security issues. As such, debates on disarmament now combine a great variety of approaches that should not cause us to lose sight of the collective and universal dimension of the stakes. That is why it is important during our work this year to focus on what unites us, rather than on what divides us. That is also why we need to strive to prioritize consensual approaches. The principle of consensus is the guarantee of effective participation, and of respect for the legitimate interests of States. Far from being an obstacle, the rule of consensus ensures that the agreements we reach will be applied by all those who have adopted them.

Permit me to recall France's commitment to the Conference on Disarmament, the only multilateral forum for the negotiation of disarmament treaties of universal scope. Indeed, it is in the Conference on Disarmament or its predecessor bodies that the major disarmament treaties have been negotiated, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, and the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Beyond its historical legitimacy, the Conference on Disarmament has three advantages that make it irreplaceable: the rule of consensus, expertise and the participation of all States with key capabilities. We can only regret the stalemate of the Conference on Disarmament. However, progress has been made, in particular during the very substantive discussions on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, that were held therein in 2014 and 2015. All participants noted the in-depth, detailed and technical discussions that made it possible for us to overcome certain divisions and gain greater insight into the difficulties. Those discussions proved that, more than ever, the subject of the fissile material cut-off treaty is at its most ripe for negotiations, which should be launched without delay at the Conference on Disarmament.

Allow me to say a few words about the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). It cannot be denied that the UNDC has not fulfilled its promises. However, in the past, it has produced useful elements. Sadly, the unproductive debates had by the UNDC nowadays are mainly the result of increasingly divergent interests, rather than, in our view, a purely institutional issue.

We should not draw the wrong conclusions from the difficulties encountered by the disarmament bodies. Many ideas have been raised during our work. Certain proposals are interesting, while others are less so. Circumventing the bodies, for example, is not solution. It will not dissipate opposition any more than it will overcome political divisions. France is convinced that in order to move forward we need to agree on a forward-looking approach in a spirit of shared responsibility. Only through a gradual, pragmatic and realistic approach can we move forward.

Allow me to conclude with a few words on the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), which plays a particular role within the disarmament machinery. The international community needs the work of UNIDIR. While it is an independent institution, its mandate focuses on the needs of Member States. But just as we need UNIDIR, UNIDIR also needs our support. That is a condition to preserve its independence, which is essential to maintain the quality of its research and to coordinate the disarmament community.

France, as it is known, has a particular responsibility towards UNIDIR, as every five years we submit a draft resolution concerning the institution. The year 2015, which marks the Institute's thirty-fifth anniversary, is also a year characterized by a number of institutional and financial challenges that the Institute must face. As such, the draft resolution France is submitting this year (A/C.1/70/L.30) aims not only to support UNIDIR during this difficult time, but also to prepare for the future, ensuring that the Institute is established on a more stable, effective and durable foundation that would serve to strengthen its relationship with Member States.

Ms. Naidoo (South Africa): At the outset, let me say that a copy of my full statement is available on Papersmart.

We welcome the advances made during the past year in strengthening the international rule of law in the multilateral disarmament and international security environment. Regrettably, the progress achieved in the areas of conventional weapons and chemical weapons has not been matched in the area of nuclear disarmament. Of particular concern to South Africa is the continuing impasse in the United Nations disarmament machinery. The prolonged stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament and the lack of agreement in the United

Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) negatively impact the multilateral system. These bodies must be allowed to fulfil their respective mandates in order to remain relevant. My delegation is disappointed that the 2015 substantive session of the UNDC ended without the adoption of any conclusions in April. This is unfortunately symptomatic of the stalemate that has marked the UNDC's deliberations for over a decade.

Of particular concern to my delegation is the stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament. At the heart of the problem lies the continued resistance by a small number of States to implementing their disarmament obligations and to subjecting themselves to the international rule of law. South Africa commends all the presidents of the 2015 session of the Conference on Disarmament for their efforts to develop a programme of work. However, we are disappointed that once again, the Conference could not resume substantive work. Over the years, South Africa has participated in the informal discussions in accordance with a schedule of activities, and for the past few years in the informal working group on a programme of work. We did so because we were hopeful that those informal discussions might have helped us to move beyond the continued deadlock. Regrettably, that has not been the case, as some have seemingly supported those efforts with the aim of creating the illusion of progress in the Conference. While we continued to refrain from blocking consensus on the decisions this year, South Africa saw no benefit in participating in these repetitive activities.

With each passing year, it has become clearer that the vast majority of States Members of the United Nations are exasperated with the lack of progress on nuclear disarmament. In April, 160 countries aligned themselves with a joint statement delivered by Austria to the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. In December 2014, 158 countries met in Vienna for the third Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons. In 2013, Member States actively participated in the open-ended working group to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons, and the General Assembly convened a successful high-level meeting on nuclear disarmament.

In 2011, South Africa, together with the Netherlands and Switzerland, put forward draft resolution

A/C.1/66/L.39, aimed at the revitalization of the multilateral disarmament machinery. That initiative resulted in the consensus adoption of resolution 66/66 and resolved to explore, consider and consolidate options, proposals and elements for revitalizing the United Nations disarmament machinery, including the Conference on Disarmament. We therefore welcome the various initiatives launched during the past year. With further activities planned for 2016, South Africa believes that solutions can be found and that multilateral governance and the international rule of law in the area of disarmament can be strengthened.

We remain ready to consider any proposals that would genuinely assist in breaking the impasse in the Conference. However, if the Conference continues to fail to execute its mandate, it may be necessary to consider suspending its work until agreement can be reached on the commencement of negotiations or to consider other options to take forward the important work with which this body has been entrusted. Negotiations are essential if we are to strengthen the international rule of law, which is key to promoting an environment of peace and security where all countries are able to play by the same rules. Such negotiations are vital if we are to achieve the requisite progress on nuclear disarmament that the world community seeks. South Africa will remain actively and constructively engaged in the Conference on Disarmament and other multilateral disarmament forums with a view to seeking a solution.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to recognize the important role and contribution of civil society in the field of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. It is our hope that interaction between Governments, members of civil society and academia could be further enhanced so that we can all benefit from the various insights and ideas presented by those different constituencies.

The Acting Chair: I would like to kindly ask representatives to deliver their statements at a speed that would allow the interpreters to perform their duties properly.

Mr. Nath (India): India associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. India has also aligned itself with the statement that will be made by the Russian Federation on behalf of a group of Member States in support of the Conference on Disarmament.

The United Nations disarmament machinery, established at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and which consists of the triad of the First Committee, the Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament, remains relevant and valid. While its overall review should be the prerogative of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, there would be merit in considering ways to improve its work efficiency.

The United Nations plays a central role and bears the primary responsibility in the sphere of disarmament. The First Committee is the embodiment of the international community's faith in the benefit of multilateral approaches on disarmament and international security issues. The United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) is the only universal forum that provides for in-depth consideration of specific disarmament issues for building greater understanding and consensus on issues on the international disarmament agenda. The Commission has produced several important sets of guidelines and recommendations for the General Assembly in the past. We support efforts to reinvigorate the work of the UNDC during the current three-year cycle.

We believe that the Conference on Disarmament continues to have the mandate, the membership and the rules of procedure to fulfil its responsibility as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum on the matter. Since the decisions of the Conference on Disarmament impact national security, it is logical that it conducts its work and adopt its decisions by consensus. Member States should exercise caution in pursuing open-ended working groups, in particular those with a negotiating mandate, to replace the established disarmament machinery, as the outcome would be uncertain.

India remains committed to efforts aimed at enabling the Conference on Disarmament to reach consensus on its programme of work and to promptly resume substantive work. While we share the disappointment that negotiations have not commenced, we value the work conducted this year within the informal working group on a programme of work, co-chaired by Finland, as well as its consensus report. India participated actively in the structured informal discussions on four of its agenda items, which provided for an in-depth consideration of issues.

We appreciate the fact that the Secretary-General has commended the report of the Group of Governmental Experts to make recommendations on possible aspects that could contribute to, but not negotiate, a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (see A/70/81) to the Conference, noting that the Group of Governmental Experts identified the Conference on Disarmament as the venue of negotiations.

The membership of various groups of governmental experts constituted by the Secretary-General has been the subject of some concern in this Committee. We regret that India was excluded from the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities and the Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security, which — in our view — lessened the content of their deliberations and reports. We hope that future groups of governmental experts will be more balanced and representative, and allow for the participation of Member States willing to make, and capable of making a positive contribution.

India highly values the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) based on the mandate given to it by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. We strongly support efforts under way to ensure the long term sustainability and effectiveness of UNIDIR as a research body of global relevance so that it can fulfil its mandate of providing in-depth and long-term research on disarmament issues, in particular nuclear disarmament.

All possible efforts should be made to enable the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific to resume its functions from Kathmandu at an early date.

The Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters should be more representative to enable an inclusive and forward-looking approach to global disarmament issues. In terms of depth of analysis and quality of vision, the reports of the Advisory Board in recent years have been less than inspiring.

Mr. Laggner (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): The international community faces multiple security challenges of a global nature, which require cooperative and multilateral solutions. In that regard, we remain entirely convinced of the fundamental importance of an

operational Conference on Disarmament that is capable of assuming its role as a single multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament matters.

The inability of the Conference on Disarmament to fulfil its negotiating mandate for almost 20 years is a cause for extreme concern. As the Secretary-General stressed to the Conference early in the 2015 session, the international community will not be satisfied with a Conference that does not help it progress towards a safer world, and that body risks being overtaken by events if it continues to fall short of expectations.

This year, which marks the beginning of a new three-year working cycle, the activities of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) have not succeeded in bridging long-standing divisions; rather, they appear to have deepened them. Every effort must be made to improve the UNDC's working methods. With a view to eliminating one well-known obstacle, Switzerland has proposed, for example, to limit discussions to a single topic per year, instead of the two usual items devoted to nuclear arms and conventional weapons. As far as this body, the First Committee, is concerned, we also recognize the potential for reform, and we support the efforts of the Chair in that regard, just as we have supported those of several of the Chair's predecessors.

In that regard, it is vitally important to revitalize the Conference on Disarmament, the UNDC and the disarmament machinery in general. The operative paragraphs of resolution 66/66, adopted by consensus by the General Assembly in 2011, remain entirely relevant today. Switzerland can only invite the Member States to more closely examine the various options, proposals and elements for the revitalization of the disarmament machinery. Although the Conference on Disarmament has managed to make some progress in certain areas, something which it should continue to do, other areas remain unexplored at this stage. I would recall here that the Conference on Disarmament needs to reassess its working methods and look closely at how it interacts with civil society.

The situation in which UNIDIR currently finds itself serves only to reinforce our concerns about the obstacles affecting the United Nations disarmament machinery. UNIDIR was established by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. It is therefore an element in the Organization's disarmament machinery, along with the

Conference on Disarmament and UNDC. The research institute has made a vital contribution to disarmament by fulfilling its mandate to facilitate negotiations in this field, providing reports and objective analyses and carrying out long-term, in-depth studies.

We would like to thank the Director of UNIDIR for having described the situation of the Institute. That presentation has clearly shown us that UNIDIR is currently in an extremely precarious financial situation, which makes it difficult for the Institute to pursue its activities. While new administrative and accounting procedures introduced at the United Nations exacerbate this situation, this dire situation is essentially caused by the absence of a sustainable system of funding and the progressive erosion of subsidies from the United Nations regular budget. If nothing is done to correct the situation, the Institute will be forced to stop operating within a few months. It is therefore imperative that, during this session, the First Committee take strong measures to support UNIDIR.

A sustainable financial system that allows the Institute to pursue its activities over the long term must be put in place promptly. In that regard, the contribution from the United Nations regular budget to UNIDIR needs to be increased in order to cover the costs of basic staff essential to its operation. Furthermore, the United Nations must give UNIDIR all the support it needs, as required by the Institute's statute. We welcome the flexibility that has already been demonstrated.

While these measures must be decided on as soon as possible, it will take some time to implement them. In view of the immediate challenges facing UNIDIR, it is essential in the meantime that Member States support the Institute on a bilateral basis. In addition to contributing to the Institute's budget and supporting several of its projects, at the beginning of this year Switzerland made a contribution to the stability fund set up by UNIDIR. Switzerland intends to continue this support, and will add to this funding this year, providing additional, non-earmarked contributions in 2016 and 2017. Switzerland calls upon other States Members of the United Nations to make similar efforts.

Finally, we welcome the draft resolution on UNIDIR proposed by the delegation of France (A/RES/70/69) and hope that it will receive the necessary support from all Member States.

Mr. Ji Haojun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): In recent years, the international community has become

increasingly concerned about the lack of substantive progress in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) and the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). The root cause of the current stalemate in the multilateral disarmament machinery lies, first of all, in political factors rather than the machinery itself or its rules of procedure.

The profound and complex changes in the international security landscape and, more importantly, double standards and erroneous doctrines for the pursuit of absolute security are the main obstacles blocking progress in the Conference on Disarmament and the UNDC. Under the new circumstances, we should make efforts to find feasible solutions to revitalize the existing multilateral disarmament machinery. We have to be innovative while preserving past achievements and ensuring the continuity of the existing machinery. All parties should uphold the authority and credibility of the multilateral disarmament machinery in a responsible manner, thereby enabling it to fully play its role in the promotion of international peace and security.

First, all parties should demonstrate adequate political will in support of the multilateral disarmament machinery with a view to bridging gaps and finding common ground through consultations on the basis of equality and mutual benefit. We should work hard for solutions that are acceptable to all so that both the CD and the UNDC can start their substantive work at an early date.

Secondly, the principle of consensus should be preserved. As the core of the rules of procedures of the CD and the UNDC, consensus is the institutional guarantee for the realization of universal, equal and common security through multilateral disarmament. History shows that the principle of consensus can ensure that the relevant negotiations are concluded in an orderly manner and achieve more effective and universal outcomes. Innovation means that, in the light of the new situation, we should keep abreast of the changing times and think out of the box in seeking a new path to overcome the deadlock.

First, the disarmament agenda items should be updated. On the one hand, the traditional disarmament agenda items mandated by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament remain relevant; on the other hand, the development of science and technology and the military revolution are having a profound impact on global strategic balance and

stability, as well as the arms control process. Therefore, it is not desirable to rigidly stick to the agenda items established over 30 years ago. Seeking piecemeal solutions outside the existing machinery is not the right way forward.

Secondly, enlargement of the membership should be considered. Today, multipolarization and the democratization of international relations have become the main feature of the contemporary world. The lack of broad representation and inclusiveness is indeed a drawback of the CD. The status quo is not conducive to the authority of the CD. We call on Member States to attach importance to this issue and tackle it properly.

China aligns itself with the joint statement in support of the CD to be made by the Russian Federation on behalf of like-minded countries. China welcomes the progress made in the work of CD, including the re-establishment of the informal working group on the programme of work and the in-depth and comprehensive discussions on the four core agenda items according to the schedule of activities. We hope that all parties value those positive developments and work hard for an early start of substantive work in the CD on the basis of a comprehensive and balanced programme of work.

China commends and supports Kazakhstan and Morocco, Chairs of the working groups of the UNDC, in their constructive efforts to revitalize the work of the UNDC. We hope that every country will take a rational and practical attitude towards the status and role of the UNDC and conduct work in a positive and pragmatic manner so as to make progress in this review round. China, together with other parties, will continue to work for the revitalization of the current multilateral disarmament machinery under the framework of the United Nations.

Mr. Robotjazi (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation associates itself with the statement made earlier by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Movement Countries (NAM).

The Islamic Republic of Iran attaches great importance to multilateralism as the core principle of negotiations in the field of disarmament. Disarmament issues are delicate and multidimensional. They also have a close relationship with the greatest national security interests of Member States. Therefore, non-discriminatory, transparent and consensus-based

multilateral negotiations within the United Nations are the only way to address disarmament issues.

The Islamic Republic of Iran underscores the vital importance and continued validity of the existing United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery. In that regard, we strongly believe that the Conference on Disarmament (CD) is and should remain the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body. We also reaffirm the importance and relevance of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) as the sole specialized deliberative body.

Based on their existing methods of work and rules of procedure, in particular the rule of consensus, the CD and the UNDC have formulated landmark universal instruments in the past. That proves not only the relevance of their mandate, but the efficiency and effectiveness of their rules of procedure, in particular the rule of consensus. Therefore, the main difficulty in the United Nations disarmament machinery lies in the lack of genuine political will by some States to achieve progress, particularly on nuclear disarmament. For instance, double standards, discriminatory policies and selective approaches towards the four core issues is the main problem with regard to the CD. In such circumstances, neither changing the rules of procedure of the CD nor the proliferation of draft resolutions and putting forward unworkable proposals to deal with highly sensitive disarmament issues is a wise solution. In our view, there is no alternative to the CD and its consensus rule. Likewise, the role of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament cannot be replaced by artificial initiatives. Instead of blaming the consensus rule of UNDC and the CD for their current stalemate, the full blame should be put on countries that consider those bodies, in particular the CD, as a single-issue venue.

We believe that the existing disarmament machinery, in particular the Conference on Disarmament, needs to be fully supported and enhanced. That is a shared objective and a common responsibility. In that regard, we would like to place particular emphasis on the need for enhancing the role of the machinery in the field of nuclear disarmament. That is the highest priority of the world community in the field of disarmament. Accordingly, we believe that the CD should focus on advancing the agenda of nuclear disarmament and the total elimination of nuclear weapons leading to a nuclear-weapon-free world. In that context, we strongly support the early commencement by the CD

of negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear-weapons convention, as proposed by NAM at the first-ever high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament (see A/67/PV.11), held in 2013.

As an active member, the Islamic Republic of Iran will continue to support a balanced and comprehensive programme of work to overcome the current stalemate in the CD. My delegation also supports NAM's position on the strict application of the principle of equitable geographical distribution in the composition of the groups of governmental experts in the field of disarmament and international security. We urge the Secretary-General to take concrete actions so as to ensure a more balanced membership of future groups of governmental experts, *inter alia*, by expanding their membership.

Before I conclude, I would like to underline the significant role of the United Nations Programme of Fellowships on Disarmament in training our diplomats in the disarmament field. Without a doubt, it is a valuable contribution to professionalism in the disarmament forums. We will continue to support it.

Mrs. Ramos (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Cuba aligns itself with the statement made earlier by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. However, we would like to address some issues in our national capacity.

Multilateralism is the basic principle undergirding negotiations on disarmament. Multilaterally agreed solutions in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations are the only sustainable method to address disarmament and international security-related issues.

The first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament established the current disarmament machinery of the United Nations system. Each of its components plays an important role and has specific functions that should be preserved. The machinery is far from perfect, which is why Cuba supports efforts to optimize and revitalize it. At the same time, we do not share the argument put forward by some who blame the working methods of the bodies of the current machinery for the lack of concrete results, in particular in the field of nuclear disarmament. The main reason for the stalemate is the lack of political will displayed by certain States. The latest Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons was a clear example of that reality. It became clear to everyone

how wide the gap was between the rhetoric and the declarations of good intentions, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the practical actions that some of the nuclear-weapon States were actually willing to allow.

The Conference on Disarmament (CD) plays an essential role as the sole multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament treaties. That body has historically been able to produce treaties when the political will of all its members prevailed. The Conference on Disarmament should adopt without further delay a comprehensive and balanced programme of work that takes into account the real priorities in the area of disarmament. In that regard, Cuba believes that the CD is prepared to negotiate in parallel a treaty to eliminate and prohibit nuclear weapons, a treaty that prohibits an arms race in outer space, a treaty that provides effective security guarantees for non-nuclear-weapon States, like Cuba, and another treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other explosive nuclear devices and that also deals with issues related to stockpiles.

The negotiation of a treaty on fissile material would be a positive, but insufficient, measure, if we were to fail to define follow-on steps to achieve nuclear disarmament. In our view, there is no higher or more urgent priority for the CD than to begin negotiations on the early conclusion of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons that would prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use and provide for their destruction.

The relevance of the United Nations Disarmament Commission as the deliberative body in the field of disarmament has been clearly demonstrated by the important recommendations that it has issued over time for negotiating international treaties and adopting measures on disarmament and arms control at the national, regional and international levels. Even when it has not been possible to agree specific recommendations, the deliberations of the Disarmament Commission have proved to be useful. No other forum offers a better platform than the Commission for debating in-depth disarmament and arms-control issues among all Member States in a comprehensive, inclusive and transparent manner. That allows for a greater understanding of the respective positions and makes it possible to clearly identify the differences and points of convergence.

The lack of progress in the disarmament machinery should not be an excuse to disregard or minimize it. We oppose the promotion of multilateral negotiations on disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control in ad hoc groups of countries or other mechanisms outside the machinery, which are characterized by selectivity and a lack of inclusiveness and transparency.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that Cuba calls for the holding, as soon as possible, of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. We believe that would have a positive impact on the revitalization and improvement of the United Nations disarmament machinery.

Mr. Kmentt (Austria): Austria aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union earlier in this meeting.

Austria places the utmost importance on an effective and well-functioning multilateral system to address the crucial disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation challenges that the international community faces. Looking at the existing forums, it is easy to find many flaws, which prevents us from making progress on those key issues. The biggest flaw, however, is not the disarmament machinery's fault. It is the lack of political will for progress in multilateral disarmament efforts among different actors that remains the key concern. The problem with the existing multilateral disarmament machinery is that it is tilted towards those States that have the most rigid approaches, which are thereby enabled to prevent the overwhelming majority of States from moving forward on key priorities. That applies most prominently to nuclear-weapon issues, but also to several other important areas on our agenda.

The lack of political will has — after almost two decades of dysfunction — so profoundly undermined the Conference on Disarmament (CD) that it seems difficult to imagine that that forum can regain its former relevance in negotiating key disarmament treaties. That is exacerbated by its restricted membership and the consequent democratic legitimacy deficit, as well as rules of procedure that can be described only as anachronistic in the twenty-first century. While Austria participated in the informal discussions and the schedule of activities, those are no substitute, to our mind, to the CD fulfilling its mandate. We should not create a false impression of activity or of the CD indeed fulfilling its mandate.

The United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) finds itself in a similar predicament. It was striking for us to see that even the most watered-down recommendations in the previous triennial cycle did not manage to get adopted by consensus. We welcome any suggestions to bring the UNDC forum back to effective functioning. However, we recognize that in the current situation that call may be just as futile as calling for the CD to adopt a programme of work.

In the light of the challenges I have mentioned, the work of the General Assembly is therefore particularly important. That is the highest forum of the United Nations where all States are represented and where all voices can be heard. In the General Assembly we can demonstrate what the overwhelming majority of States sees as priorities, and we can take decisions to advance the disarmament agenda. One such decision can be taken at this year's session in the form of establishing an open-ended working group to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations. Austria hopes that Member States will capitalize on the opportunity to create such a body, which would allow all States to engage on nuclear disarmament issues without the procedural set-up that stifles progress in other forums of the United Nations disarmament machinery. We would like to invite all States to support the relevant draft resolution (A/C.1/70/L.13/Rev.1) submitted by Mexico, of which Austria is a sponsor.

Finally, Austria would like to put on record its support for the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR). UNIDIR is currently in a difficult financial situation and lacks predictable funding. In Austria's view, UNIDIR has for decades provided a crucial service and contribution to the international community through its broad range of independent research on disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation issues. We deem it important that the First Committee take action to ensure UNIDIR's continued effective functioning and — foremost of all — financial sustainability for the future.

Mr. Herráiz España (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Spain fully aligns itself with the statement made earlier by the observer of the European Union.

We believe that the best way to preserve international peace and security is through a multilateral approach and collective efforts to address disarmament and non-proliferation issues. That is why my delegation strongly supports the strengthening of

multilateral institutions at the service disarmament and non-proliferation, namely, the First Committee, the Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament.

Spain would like to reiterate its support for the Conference on Disarmament as the sole standing body for the negotiation of multilateral treaties in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation, and we support all measures to promote its revitalization. We note with concern the ongoing deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament, which should lead us to strengthen our political will to overcome the situation and resume the negotiating process as soon as possible. As stated repeatedly in this body, the problems affecting the Conference concern procedure as well as political will. With regard to procedure, allow me to highlight the importance of the consensus rule consensus as a fundamental principle that should govern the rules of procedure in the field of disarmament. However, as my delegation understands it, consensus is an inclusive practice born of the need to address all the concerns of Member States, as opposed to a way to exclude any possibility for debate, thereby undermining the negotiating mandate of the Conference.

We understand that the elaboration of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices is the issue that affords the Conference a chance at greater political and technical maturity, and is the next logical step to be taken in a negotiating process. The excellent work of analysis and informal discussion that has been carried out over the past two years by the Group of Governmental Experts tasked with making recommendations on possible aspects that could contribute to, but not negotiate, a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices has given us new elements for possible considerations on a future treaty of this nature. At the same time, we feel that, if any State wishes to raise legitimate security interests in that context, they can do so without undermining those interests during negotiations. There are useful background documents for that purpose, such as CD/1864 — the decision for the establishment of a programme of work for the 2009 session — and CD/1299, also known as the Shannon mandate, of 1995.

This year the Conference on Disarmament held substantive discussions on the so-called calendar of events, which would be necessary to maintain going

forward, as well as the continuation of efforts through an informal working group to establish a programme of work. Spain is in favour of enriching the content of such substantive discussions to facilitate future treaty negotiations, while also incorporating new potential technical issues that may be of interest, such as transparency and verification.

It is our understanding that the methods of work of the Conference should be further streamlined, without prejudice to the principle of consensus — which should continue to serve as the foundation of the inclusive nature of disarmament negotiations. We also call for the start of a debate on the possibility of a reasonable expansion of the membership of the Conference and the establishment of the appropriate participation of civil society in the Conference.

It is also necessary that the Disarmament Commission start to produce tangible results. To that end, the Commission should pay more attention to

streamlining debates and making them more targeted and specific while focusing on the priority issues submitted for discussion. Furthermore, the progress achieved should be reflected in working documents drafted by the presidency, so that the work of subsequent sessions can build on previous deliberations.

It is also necessary to review and strengthen the working dynamics of the First Commission. Our work should focus on the search for bold solutions to current problems, rather than on the revision of agreed texts.

Spain reaffirms its commitment to the disarmament machinery. We are far from satisfied with the current structures and working methods, and our commitment is such that we are open to discussion and reflection on any initiative for the review and strengthening of that machinery. We stand ready to work with all delegations here to achieve those objectives.

The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.