

Conference on Disarmament

English

Final record of the one thousand four hundred and eighty-ninth meeting


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President: Mr. Aidan Liddle..... (United Kingdom)

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The President: I call to order the 1489th meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. Distinguished delegates, as I mentioned yesterday, I would like to divert today's plenary session, in the main, to hearing your comments and feedback on the draft decision set out in working paper CD/WP.619 circulated by the secretariat on 21 February 2019.

Before proceeding to that discussion, however, I intend to complete the list of delegations which had requested the floor at the end of the high-level segment yesterday and I would like to thank them for their patience in allowing us to close that meeting on time. After that, delegations which wish to address other matters will also have the chance to do so before we move to a discussion of the draft decision.

Moving back to the list of speakers from yesterday, I would now like to give the floor to the distinguished Ambassador of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Mr. Valero (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): Distinguished President, Ambassadors, we are grateful for the constructive statements made by many countries during the high-level segment. As everyone here knows, our delegation has always participated in this forum with a respectful and cooperative attitude.

We have never used the Conference on Disarmament to raise items not on the agenda. We therefore deplore the fact that the delegation of the United States of America has dragged the internal affairs of Venezuela into this forum.

The attitude of Donald Trump's Government and some of his satellite governments that have disrespected the most basic rules of diplomatic protocol has been embarrassing, with the ridiculous and childish show that they put on yesterday when Chancellor Jorge Arreaza and Deputy Minister Félix Plasencia spoke before the Human Rights Council and this Conference, respectively.

Under the circumstances, we have no choice but to make use of our right of reply, as follows. We find it deeply regrettable that this body is being used to make value judgments on internal matters that concern Venezuelans and the Bolivarian Government.

It is unprecedented that representatives of the Government of the United States of America should express their concern about the situation in our country while they openly promote a coup d'état against the democratic institutions of the Venezuelan State, its Government and its people.

A government such as the Government of the United States of America, which is run by a President who engages in racist and xenophobic behaviour and is openly belligerent and interventionist, has no moral authority to question the participatory and proactive democracy that exists in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela denounces the coup d'état promoted by the Government of Donald Trump against the Venezuelan Government and its preparations for, and threats of, a military invasion of the country.

An attempt has been made to strip the Venezuelan people of their political will, as expressed in the constitutional elections of May 2018, in which President Nicolás Maduro Moros was elected by millions of Venezuelans through free, universal, direct and secret elections.

The Government of Donald Trump and some subordinate governments have tried to impose a puppet, a puppet who swore himself in on a street in Caracas in a bid to trample over the democratic and sovereign will of the Venezuelan people.

Most countries of the world – yes, that is right – most countries of the world have condemned the attempt to settle the political differences in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela through genocidal military action that would cause thousands of deaths.

The Trump Government and its satellites are using the issue of humanitarian aid as a cynical pretext for invading Venezuela. They have not succeeded, nor will they. They offer to donate \$20 million worth of low-grade medicines and contaminated food that has already caused deaths in Colombia while stealing and blocking more than \$35 billion that belongs

to the Venezuelan people. Return the money, the dollars stolen from Venezuela. Return the \$35 billion so that we can buy medicines and food for our people.

The current situation is no different from the coup d'état suffered by President Hugo Chávez Frías in 2002. Both coups have failed and will fail because the Venezuelan people have defeated them categorically and emphatically. There is a need, distinguished diplomatic representatives, instead of promoting war and interventionism, to promote political dialogue between the actors involved. We reiterate that dialogue, understanding and tolerance are indispensable for human fellowship.

The Bolivarian Government raises the flag of peace. The Bolivarian Government rejects threats of war. We therefore invite the countries here present to reject war and the threat of war, which the Donald Trump administration is trying to impose on our region, because, friends, an invasion of Venezuela would have an impact, not only at the regional level, but worldwide.

In Venezuela, there is a choice to be made today: peace or war. Venezuela chooses peace. Trump's Government chooses war. Venezuela chooses dialogue. Trump's Government chooses interventionism and violence. The greed shown by the Government of the United States of America is so aberrant and cruel that even governments influenced by that administration have rejected its threat of military intervention, and I am talking about the so-called Lima Group.

We welcome the statement made two days ago by the Spokesperson for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of the European Commission, Maja Kocijančič, who said in a press conference, and I quote: "The position of the European Union at the moment is very clear; I must repeat, the position of the European Union in this context is very clear: we must avoid a military intervention", which, to use my own words, is what Trump's Government hopes to carry out.

We also take note of the statements made by some dignitaries from our region in which they refuse to offer their territory as a space for promoting a foreign invasion of our country.

Mr. President, distinguished diplomats of the world who are gathered here: peace for Venezuela, peace for Latin America and the Caribbean, peace for the world. Thank you very much.

The President: I thank the distinguished Ambassador of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela for his statement. The next speaker on my list is the distinguished Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Hamaneh (Islamic Republic of Iran): Thank you, Mr. President. Yesterday afternoon, the United States representative talked extensively, apparently in reaction to my delegation's statement. He has stretched his imagination to the utmost in an endeavour to find every error or sin that the human being is possibly capable of committing and to attribute these to Iran.

We did not try to shut him down, as his delegation did a couple of weeks ago and happily tweeted about right after. We did not compel the President to block him by calling him out on a point of order despite the fact that his whole statement was irrelevant to the Conference's agenda items. We did not walk out in anger and we did not make silly, noisy gestures. We simply listened and let him reveal what his delegation needed to say. I believe that is what courtesy and professionalism requires us all to do. After all, we are Iranians.

To tell the truth, I was informed about the United States' absurd statement by two distinguished colleagues before my colleagues reported it to me. One ambassador told me that it had been a remarkable scene and another, who happens to be a close friend of the United States representative, described it as a lapse of etiquette, even by current United States standards.

I would rather not respond to those claims since they are truly baseless and patently absurd. I would only note that I did not mean to offend anyone in the room when I raised a number of unchallenged facts. And I stand to be corrected if, for instance, my remarks about the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces

Treaty, nuclear posturing and other matters, were incorrect. Is it not true, for instance, that, very recently in Munich, Vice-President Mike Pence urged Europeans to follow the United States path and withdraw from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action?

When it comes to terrorism – and I regret that we should have to talk about completely irrelevant things in this forum – everyone knows that the United States has mastered the art of creating, organizing and financing terrorism. This is not a mere claim or tit-for-tat allegation. It is a fact. The President of the United States has himself admitted more than once that ISIS was founded by the United States. The former Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, who, according to President Trump, co-founded ISIS, confirmed a few years earlier that the United States was behind the formation of the predecessors of ISIS, Al-Qaida and the Taliban. Here is exactly what she said: “Let us remember here that people we are fighting today we funded 20 years ago, and we did it because we were locked in a struggle with the Soviet Union. They invaded Afghanistan and we did not want to see them control Central Asia and we went to war, and it was President Reagan, in partnership with Congress led by Democrats, who said, ‘You know, that sounds like a pretty good idea. Let us go recruit these mujahidin. And great, let them come from Saudi Arabia and other countries, importing their Wahhabi brand of Islam so that we can go beat the Soviet Union.’ And guess what? They retreated, they lost billions of dollars and it led to the collapse of the Soviet Union. So there is a very strong argument which is: it was not a bad investment in terms of the Soviet Union. But let us be careful with what we sow because we will harvest.”

That is not all. Mr. Bolton and Mr. Pompeo have been frequent key speakers at rallies held by a notorious terrorist group, the Mujahedin-e-Khalq Organization, which was for a long time on the United States’ list of terrorist groups.

In conclusion, Mr. President, and in my hope that we will really focus on the main issues of concern to the Conference on Disarmament, I would like to say that we should not reduce this respected platform to a chamber for showcasing pledges of allegiance to our kings or bosses or whatever hierarchy to which we believe that we need to prove our absolute loyalty. This, I fear, is not the best place to curry favour with our bosses.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran for his statement. The next on my list is the representative of Romania.

Ms. Beloancă (Romania): Mr. President, allow me to take this opportunity to congratulate you on the assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and to pledge, once again, Romania’s full support for your work for the benefit of the Conference.

My delegation is exercising its right of reply following the reference by our Russian colleagues in the context of the discussion of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty at the end of yesterday’s plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament to the deployment of the United States Mk-41 launch systems in Romania. Allow me to put on record, once again, the Romanian official position on this issue. Connecting the ballistic missile defence facility in Romania with an intermediate-range nuclear force is quite unfounded since the Deveselu anti-missile system is not covered by the Treaty. Romania has repeatedly stated that the anti-missile approach of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) represents an action proportionate to the current threats, with respect for all international commitments. Moreover, Romania’s position regarding the NATO ballistic missile defence system, of which the Deveselu facility forms an integral part, remains the same, namely, that we unfailingly insist that the system is purely defensive. Furthermore, the Russian Federation has received all the necessary assurances and explanations both from Romania and from its NATO allies in this regard.

We will continue to promote the need for dialogue in order to clarify all such misunderstandings and misinterpretations.

The President: I thank the distinguished representative of Romania for her statement and for her kind words addressed to the Chair. The next speaker on the list is the Ambassador of the United States of America.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): Mr. President, I am requesting the floor to respond to a number of statements that have been made.

Let me start with the remarks by the representative of the Maduro regime. Yesterday was a significant moment. A number of countries stood up and left not only this Chamber but also the Human Rights Council in protest over visits by the Maduro regime's Foreign Minister and Deputy Foreign Minister. It was an important day and it sent a powerful signal not just to those of us who were sitting in these two chambers but also, and most important, to the Venezuelan people. As I said, it was a historic day which symbolized the opposition to what the Maduro regime is doing to its own people. The representative said that the United States is waging war on Venezuela. Maduro is waging war on his own people. He mentioned that the shipments by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the work being done by the United States are an "example of cruelty", I believe he used that word. Cruelty is starving your people, denying medicines to those who need it; that is cruelty. He mentioned that the United States is interfering, that what is going on in Venezuela is a domestic issue. It is more than a domestic issue. When there are 3 million people fleeing Venezuela, it makes it a regional concern and countries of the region have expressed their dismay at what is going on. He claimed that Maduro was elected in a free, fair and transparent election. We all know that that election was fraudulent. It was simply a sham.

I am not going to say much more, other than to stress that what I have been saying over the last two days is quite relevant to the Conference on Disarmament and that, with regard to the scheduled assumption by Venezuela in May of the Conference's presidency it would be a travesty for the Maduro regime to occupy that seat. We will continue to express our opposition to the regime taking up that presidency, which would be a disaster for this body.

I will leave it there on the issue of Venezuela. Let me first make one last point, to remind everyone of those very sad pictures and pictures do not lie. We have all seen the footage coming out of Venezuela and the attacks on innocent Venezuelan people just trying to obtain humanitarian supplies and to obtain their freedom. Yet, at the same time, Maduro was literally dancing while truckloads of food aid were being burned. These are truly unconscionable acts. But the issue is one of a simple choice: the choice in Venezuela is between democracy and dictatorship, and we must not allow 30 usurpers to deny liberty to 30 million people.

If I may now take up the issue of Iran, once again, for the second day in a row, we have a representative from the world's largest State supporter of terrorism addressing an international body, claiming Iran to be righteous. I need say no more than to recall his statement that the charges I made yesterday were baseless. Are we to assume that taking American hostages for 444 days, 40 years ago, is baseless? It is a fact. The fact that Iran was developing a nuclear weapons programme – that too is not baseless, that is a fact. Providing ballistic missiles to the Houthi rebels and Hizbullah – we all know that to be a fact. Again, I do not wish to waste more time responding to these ridiculous accusations but the next time that we hear these types of ridiculous charges from a representative of Iran, we should consider the source of these charges.

My last comments – last but certainly not least – respond to the very sad comments made by our Russian colleague yesterday, reading a text which we might assume was a statement from President Putin and which made it very clear, not only to this chamber but to all others who were paying attention around the world, where the source of the tension and the source of the problem lies. Russia has violated countless treaties: the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Open Skies Agreement, the Vienna Document. I might also note that yesterday marked the fifth anniversary of Russia's illegal occupation and annexation of Crimea, and let us recall the attacks in Salisbury. Russia flouted its commitments to the Budapest Memorandum; it has engaged in malign behaviour in various parts of the globe; it has developed ground-based anti-satellite weapons; it has carried out cyberattacks; it has undertaken efforts to redraw European borders by force.

Then, on top of all that, to hear that statement delivered here in the Conference on Disarmament, containing remarks made by, I believe, President Putin, was something quite shocking for a number of countries in this Chamber. There again, however, it shows exactly what my Administration has been saying for quite some time about Russia. What Russia

needs to do is to start behaving responsibly. It needs to stop all these things that it is doing, all these malign acts. It wants to be a partner, it claims to be a partner, but partners do not behave in this manner. Making open threats against the United States, using weapons against the United States. It is a sad day when things like that comes before is in this body. So, my hope and my message to our Russian colleagues is the following: stop this malign behaviour, stop threatening to attack other countries with sophisticated weapons and nuclear weapons, and actually be constructive. And then I believe all of us will be better served.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of the United States for his statement. The next in the list of speakers is the representative of Poland.

Mr. Broilo (Poland): Thank you, Mr. President, for allowing me to exercise my right of reply. I would like to refer to the intervention made yesterday by our Russian colleague.

It was an interesting and very clear presentation. He quoted a text referring to plans for the deployment of missile launchers in Poland. He repeated very familiar theories about this issue. Let me stress that we have informed our Russian partners and explained to them on many occasions that this is going to be a purely defensive system and that Poland is not interested in acquiring any offensive missile systems.

The President: I thank the representative of Poland for his statement. Before we move on to our main business for today, is there any delegation which would like to take the floor on general matters or matters connected with yesterday's high-level segment? I recognize the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Hamaneh (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. President, I regret that, again, I must react to a matter to which our United States colleague referred, which occurred 40 years ago, and one should perhaps sympathize with them because this is the source of their animosity: the fact that 40 years ago, the Iranian people decided to kick out a brutal dictatorship supported by the United States. We can understand how they feel about this but they should not expect us to apologize for what we did 40 years ago against a brutal dictatorship. Please also bear in mind that the Iranian people retained the institutional memory that, only 30 years before that, in 1953, their inspiration, their quest for freedom and democracy had been quashed by a coup d'état, again orchestrated by the United States.

Yes, what happened 40 years ago is indeed a fact; but for more than a year, no one was hurt, and it is interesting to note that what happened after that. Can they make the same claim that they have not hurt any Iranians during the past 40 years? Let us recall what they did during our war with Saddam Hussein: they provided all kinds of beautiful weapons to Saddam Hussein, including chemical weapons. So please do not try to manipulate the facts. The so-called "charges" that I made were not charges, they were facts. And I was quoting a certain United States former official, her words about the creation of the biggest, the most dangerous terrorist group that the world has ever seen.

I agree with the United States representative that it is cruelty to deny medicines to those in need. And that is why we believe that the United States Administration is cruel because its unilateral coercive measures have caused many children who are in need of medicines and medical devices to be denied their right to health and their right to life in the targeted countries. Once again, I agree with him that pictures do not lie and I invite people please to take a look at the pictures, very grotesque pictures from Yemen, where people are being killed and maimed by the beautiful weapons of the United States. So, please, we do not like to waste our time quoting facts which may perhaps be irrelevant to this Chamber. But again, I think, we are all required to exercise professionalism, courtesy and respect.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran for his statement and I now give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Deyneko (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): You know that, as a rule, the Russian delegation does not take part in discussions of political subjects, but this is now not the case.

The thing is that, with all respect to my colleagues, I would once again like to emphasize that my statement yesterday was based on the address of the President of the Russian Federation to the Federal Assembly. The highest State official in the Russian Federation. You appreciate the difference?

Secondly, no colleague has ever, on any occasion, provided any, I stress, any evidence that the Mk-41 universal launcher is being used for the purposes of missile defence, or that it is fundamentally different from that used to launch Tomahawk medium-range cruise missiles.

Furthermore, in January, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Defence held a briefing on this missile which allegedly breaches the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, at which the missile was on display alongside its predecessor. The essential technical explanations were provided.

If our American colleagues are so convinced that the Mk-41 launcher is used exclusively for the purposes of missile defence and cannot be used for any other purposes, including those of which I spoke earlier, what has prevented them from going for reciprocal measures of transparency and carrying out the same sort of demonstration, with the vital technical explanations, in order to address the parties' concerns? This is basically the path suggested to our American colleagues. That would then really be a professional, substantive exchange.

In the final analysis, there has been no exchange. Moreover, neither our American colleagues nor many other colleagues from member countries of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization – I am not sure about the Polish and Romanian representatives – attended the Ministry of Defence briefing and gave any indication that it was wrong, insufficient, etc.

Excuse me, we went for unilateral voluntary measures of transparency and it is not for others to suggest what form these measures should take. If there had been bilateral reciprocal measures of transparency then we could have agreed on their modalities, that is a subject for negotiations. Why not? Unlike our American colleagues, we were prepared to do this.

This is just one example of a long set of proposals that the Russian Federation has made over the last few years to Donald Trump's administration. So far, without any response. Perhaps my colleague Robert Wood will relay it somehow.

The President: I thank the distinguished representative of the Russian Federation for his statement and I give the floor, once again, to the Ambassador of the United States.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): Mr. President, if I may briefly respond to the remarks made by the Iranian representative: that was a very important message that he just relayed. It made it clear that Iran has no plans to apologize for that criminal act, which was certainly in violation of international law, taking 440 diplomats, essentially an embassy full of diplomats, hostage for 444 days. That statement itself, I think, speaks volumes about the regime and its so-called commitment to international law. Let me make clear once again, however, that my Government is taking steps to make sure that we can absolutely cut off financing for this reign of terror that the Iranian regime is propagating around the world.

With regard to the remarks just made by my colleague, Mr. Deyneko, as he knows quite well and as others in this room know quite well, the United States went well beyond what we would normally have needed to do in terms of meetings to try to work out and to resolve this issue regarding Russia's violation of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. We all know how long it took for Russia just to admit that it actually was manufacturing this ground launch cruise missile, although it claimed that it was not doing so and that the range of the missile was not in violation of the Treaty. We all know that not to be true. I believe, however, that the biggest indictment of Russia's position with regard to the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty took place this fall in New York, when Russia, as we all know, put forward a last-minute, last-second resolution, in the First Committee, on the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, trying to shift the blame for the problem on to the United States. The resolution was defeated procedurally and then it was put forward again in the General Assembly and again it was defeated.

Thus I would say to my Russian colleagues that their narrative with regard to the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty is old and stale and no one is listening to it anymore, but the international community is making the point that Russia needs to comply with the Treaty. I do not need to bore this room with the details of the back-and-forth of what is going on, I think countries are well aware of that, so I will just call on my Russian colleagues to stop trying to pin the blame on the United States, we all know where that blame belongs.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of the United States for his statement. As the last on my list of speakers for this segment of our morning's business, I give the floor to the Ambassador of Argentina.

Mr. Foradori (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Mr. President. Argentina greatly appreciates all the efforts made during its presidency, and thanks the United Kingdom for preparing this draft decision on the establishment of subsidiary bodies and the appointment of special coordinators.

Mr. President, bearing in mind the difficulties posed by the current international security situation, we believe that this proposal enhances dialogue and gives us the opportunity to revitalize the work of the Conference on Disarmament, an impetus that, on the occasion of its fortieth anniversary, has become indispensable.

We believe that the Conference on Disarmament is settling on the idea of pursuing dialogue and its own institutionalization. As we have said since the establishment of the working group on the way ahead, we are in favour of a sustainable approach to addressing the substantive work of the Conference on Disarmament. We believe that we must work so that, each year, we feel comparatively better than the year before. In this regard, we think that the proposal put forward by the presidency is a substantial improvement on previous iterations. In this respect, we would like to highlight the following:

Firstly, we believe that the mandate proposed by each of the subsidiary bodies reflects the different degrees of maturity and different levels of consensus on each of the four central items on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament.

Secondly, we welcome the call in the proposal for the first and last meetings of each subsidiary body to be formal. We think that this puts us on the right track, striking a balance between formal and informal.

Thirdly, we support the proposal to appoint a "troika" of coordinators, representing the regional groups, to address working methods and expansion of the membership. It is highly appropriate that there should be regional representation, which will be essential to facilitate consensus. We also believe that it would be constructive for equitable geographical representation to be taken into account when assessing the issue of expansion. We also appreciate the fact that this draft decision does not mean leaving aside the debate on the possibility of adopting a programme of work, which should always be a primary objective at the beginning of the Conference. This is important in view of the next Review Conference of the Parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in 2020.

Mr. President, we are convinced that the substantive and ongoing debate, as you present it, will strengthen the Conference on Disarmament and give impetus to its work. In order to negotiate a legally binding instrument, it is necessary and essential to debate without time constraints or unrealistic conditions, taking into account what is best and most constructive for the security interests of all States. These parameters should guide us in clarifying the way forward.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Argentina for his statement. Following his lead, I would now like to move the business on to the main business at hand but I recognize that the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran has asked for the floor again.

Mr. Hamaneh (Islamic Republic of Iran): I thank you, Mr. President, for your patience, and I hope that this will be the last time that I take the floor.

I have taken the floor because I have witnessed that the facts are being twisted right before our eyes. What I said was this: please do not expect us to apologize for what we did 40 years ago by kicking out a dictator who was supported and very much loved by the

United States. And if you want us to list some, just a few, of the atrocious acts that you have committed against the Iranian people and to seek your apologies, let me start with the 1953 coup d'état; then your support of Saddam Hussein's aggression against Iran and your supplying him with chemical weapons; your imposition of inhumane sanctions on Iran without any justification; your fuelling of violence and creation of chaos in our region; your continued support of terrorist groups all around the globe. So, again, I know how enamoured you are of dictators, but be assured, at least as far as Iranians are concerned, that they are not going to apologize for what they did 40 years ago by toppling a dictator.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran for his statements. I recognize that the Ambassador of the United States has requested the floor again. Please, colleagues, if I may beg your indulgence, we have plenty of matters of substance to discuss this morning and I would like to move on. The Ambassador of the United States has the floor.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): Mr. President, I regret to have to take the floor again in response again to the Iranian representative. The act that I am talking about was the taking of hostages, American diplomats, in violation of that international law which the regime claims to uphold on a daily basis. I am not going to waste any further time on this issue, except to say that I will come back and I will come back with a full list of terrorist acts that this regime has committed around the globe since its taking control of Tehran, 40 years ago.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of the United States for his statement.

Colleagues, I would now like to move on to the substance of the draft decision contained in working paper CD/WP.619, circulated by the secretariat on 21 February. I would welcome any statements that delegations would like to make in our formal meeting. After that, I would like to switch to an informal setting to allow delegations which prefer to express their views informally to do so.

Would any delegation like to take the floor in our formal setting, before we switch to an informal meeting? I recognize the distinguished representative of Poland.

Mr. Broilo (Poland): Mr. President, thank you very much for the draft decision that you presented on 21 February. We perceive it as the natural consequence of a sober and thorough assessment of the situation in the Conference on Disarmament. Following the presentation of the draft programme of work by the Ukrainian presidency, it seems to us that we are not yet ready to commence negotiations on any other matter. What we need is another preparatory step in order to narrow down a spectrum of possibilities.

Your draft decision is a right step in this direction. Having adopted this draft, we would have a chance, with the subsidiary bodies, to continue important substantial work on the core issues of the agenda, while being able at the same time, by nominating special coordinators, to proceed with reviewing the membership of the Conference on Disarmament, in accordance with paragraph 2 of the rules of procedure, and with consulting on all aspects of the working methods.

In our conviction, this activity would not in any way be inconsistent with the substantial part of our work: it would inspire and stimulate the Conference in its efforts to return promptly to negotiations.

To sum up, Mr. President, we welcome your draft and we are ready actively to support you in this endeavour.

The President: I thank the representative of Poland for his statement. Next on the list of speakers is the representative of Belarus.

Mr. Nikolaichik (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): Mr. President, allow me to congratulate you on the draft decision which has been presented. In our opinion, it has the potential for forming the basis of progress during the session in 2019.

With regard to the section on setting up four subsidiary bodies, we would like to make the following comment.

We think that the suggestion made by a number of delegations regarding a comprehensive examination of all the agenda items related to nuclear disarmament is logical. That would allow for a holistic and interrelated approach to those agenda items. We think that we should consider that option more carefully as a way of streamlining the work of the Conference.

We understand the aspiration to set the Conference on the path to substantive work.

In this connection, we welcome the inclusion in the subsidiary bodies' mandate of specific aspects which might be examined. From the legal viewpoint, one suitable activity is precisely that associated with negotiations, the resumption of which has been much discussed in this room.

Moreover, it seems to us that it would be advisable, for the definition of the subsidiary bodies' mandate in paragraph 1, to use standard wording with a direct reference to the relevant provisions of international agreements or other international instruments. I will read it out in English and then I will pass the wording to the President through the secretariat. We suggest the use of the following text:

(spoke in English)

With a particular focus on object, purpose, scope, form, definitions, substantive clauses, including, among other matters, principles, verification, transparency, safeguarding legitimate activities and confidence-building measures, and also on determining the preliminary order and timing of drafting of an international legally binding instrument or international arrangement.

(spoke in Russian)

We think that such wording would not jeopardize the outcome of the respective subsidiary bodies' work in 2018 or of earlier proposals, but would, at the same time, avoid possible criticism regarding the selective nature of approaches, while also giving the coordinators of the corresponding bodies a certain freedom of action.

We stand ready to continue work on the search for a mutually acceptable definition of the subsidiary bodies' mandates.

With regard to the suggestion that a special coordinator on emerging issues and new technologies be appointed, we consider (and we made a statement on this during the high-level segment) that the time has come to end the practice of dividing the agenda into core and secondary issues.

We suggest that continued work on assessing the influence of new challenges and threats to international security on the basis of the results of the activity of the working group on the way ahead and subsidiary body 5 during this session will help to overcome this division.

With regard to organization, we are prepared to be flexible, bearing in mind the rule on the adoption of decisions by consensus.

As far as a collective special coordinator on working methods and expansion of membership are concerned, we suggest that, in the document, it is essential to focus more on cooperation between the coordinators, including when drawing up the outcome document. Their report must at least be the product of consensus between the coordinators themselves.

Apart from that, we think that the activity of the special coordinator could, inter alia, be dedicated to the study and analysis of the best practices, including rules and working methods, of other forums within the United Nations system, including the International Law Commission and the Sixth Committee of the General Assembly.

For our part, we wish once again to confirm that we are prepared to cooperate constructively on drawing up a consensual draft decision. We share the concern over the growing politicization of the Conference's work and its potential adverse consequences.

We invite the Member States of the Conference, regardless of their political preferences, strongly to confirm their commitment to and support of the fundamental

principles set forth in the United Nations Charter and also of the Conference's mandate and rules of procedure.

The President: I thank the representative of Belarus for his statement and for his proposals. The next on the list is the Ambassador of the United States.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): Thank you, Mr. President, for this latest draft of your programme of work. I believe that it is a very solid document and I understand that my delegation has passed on to you some of our suggested additions to the document. With regard to the special coordinators, I would just like to remark that, for my delegation and, I believe, for a number of other delegations in this room, this is an important way forward and I want to thank you, again, for including the coordinators for the issues of working methods and expansion of the membership. Those are critical for my Government in terms of supporting this document. I would just like to make a request with regard to the time allotted for discussion of these issues. I understand that the coordinators will be consulting with delegations behind the scenes, but I believe that it is also important for there to be a discussion in this chamber; it will be good to have at least one formal discussion so that countries can place on record what their views are with regard to the questions of expanding the membership and the rules of procedure, but also to have an informal session so that countries can be more frank about their views on these issues. My delegation therefore looks forward to working with you and your team and others in this room in coming up with a programme of work that can command consensus.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of the United States for his statement and his proposals. The next speaker on the list is the Ambassador of Ecuador.

Mr. Izquierdo (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, I would like to congratulate you on your skilful leadership during the three days of the high-level segment of the Conference, when we heard several senior representatives refer to the delicate international situation and the urgent need to make progress in the substantive work of this Conference.

In this regard, I would like to highlight what the Secretary-General of the United Nations said in his statement, in which he warned of the current dangers, pointing out that, and I quote: "States are seeking security not in the proven collective value of diplomacy and dialogue, but in developing and accumulating new weapons", and indicating that this situation "is particularly dangerous as regards nuclear weapons".

In such circumstances, it is crucial that we intensify our efforts to counter this trend and begin our work immediately. Ecuador therefore thanks you for the draft decision submitted last week, which reflects many of the comments made by delegations in this Conference.

While we have already pointed out that our delegation would have liked to have seen more ambition in establishing a clear negotiating mandate, we believe that your proposal is pragmatic and balanced, with some important elements that should be highlighted.

With regard to the subsidiary bodies, we agree with the proposed balance of discussions on the four main items before this Conference, and with the holding of formal meetings at the beginning and end of each one, which will enable this Conference to have a record of the discussions held, including the main conclusions reached by the delegations.

We also find it appropriate that the main issues to be dealt with by the four subsidiary bodies have been more precisely defined, which takes into account the concern expressed by several delegations about the need to build on what was achieved last year. We have no objection to the appointment of a special coordinator on emerging issues and new technologies. We also agree with the appointment of a special coordinator on working methods and expansion of the membership, while reiterating the need for his or her analysis to be comprehensive and balanced.

Mr. President, in view of the foregoing considerations, and taking into account the urgent need to start work in the Conference on Disarmament, Ecuador could support the adoption of this draft decision. To this end, all that remains to be done is to resolve the

outstanding issues, namely the appointment of the coordinators of the subsidiary bodies and of the special coordinators, and the calendar of meetings, which should reflect the balance described in the text of the decision.

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

Mr. Bektikusuma (Indonesia): Mr. President, since this is the first time that my delegation is taking the floor under your presidency, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of this august body and to wish you every success in the performance of your duties. You may rest assured of the support and constructive engagement of my delegation. I would also like to thank you and your team for the draft proposal for decisions by the Conference on the establishment of subsidiary bodies and special coordinators for the 2019 session, along with your explanatory letter which was distributed by the secretariat on 21 February 2019.

Allow me to take this opportunity to share my country's views on your draft decisions as follows. First, although my delegation understands that it is difficult to find consensus on launching negotiations on any issues at this time, we regret that the Conference has to take a step backwards by preparing a draft decision instead of a programme of work with a negotiation mandate. As I have stated on previous occasions during informal consultations with you, Mr. President, your proposal sounds like a programme of work to our delegation and my delegation truly wishes that, in some way, we can turn it into a programme of work, with a negotiation mandate.

Second, on the reestablishment of subsidiary bodies, my delegation believes that there is still some imbalance regarding the substantive issues that will be discussed under each subsidiary body. Furthermore, we are of the view that too much detail is provided on the substance that will be discussed under each subsidiary body. This may make it hard for future coordinators to make manoeuvres during the deliberations.

Third, my delegation underscores the importance of the items on the Conference's agenda, on which we have agreed by consensus and which are reflected in document CD/2153 adopted at the 1475th plenary meeting on 21 January 2019. In this regard, we would prefer the establishment of the subsidiary bodies to be assigned to those items rather than to the core issues of the Conference on Disarmament. In point of fact, the core issues of the Conference on Disarmament are part of its agenda.

Fourth, the issue of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, or what we know as negative security assurances, is one of my national priorities and also a priority of the Group of 21, to which my delegation fully subscribes. At the moment, my delegation is concerned about the formulations for subsidiary body 4, which seem to place the issues on a lower tier than that of the other issues, owing to the failure in 2018 to adopt the final report of subsidiary body 4. My delegation would like to emphasize that last year's failure to adopt a report on the subsidiary body will never, in any way, detract from the significant nature of the issue or from any attempt to conclude it.

Fifth, on the establishment of the special coordinator, my delegation welcomes the idea of discussing the membership and the method of work of the Conference on Disarmament. Nevertheless, this must not be a precondition for, or an attempt to distract us from, our substantive work. We are flexible with these logistical arrangements and stand ready to engage with concerned member States to bridge the divided views on this matter.

Sixth, my delegation also underscores the importance of rotating the future coordinators of the subsidiary bodies, although that, Mr. President, will really depend on the number of volunteers that you have. I hope that you have many. It is vital to foster in all member States of the Conference on Disarmament the sense of belonging and we believe that a rotational system will bring new approaches and fresh initiatives and, we hope, will pave the way to negotiations.

Last but not least, although we comprehend that the final arrangements regarding on the number of meetings and the timetable of the subsidiary bodies are pending the appointment of their coordinator, we believe that an allocation of up to 10 meetings for

each subsidiary body is quite overwhelming, given the packed schedule of disarmament activities this year. We also need to balance the logistical arrangements of each subsidiary body. It might create complications if one or two subsidiary bodies conduct more or fewer meetings than the others.

Before I conclude, I would like to comment on the suggestion raised by one delegation yesterday on the possibility of discussing nuclear disarmament issues in a comprehensive manner within one subsidiary body. We believe that this would be a sound alternative not only making it possible to tackle the issues in an all-inclusive manner and to the same degree but also offering a more efficient approach given the large number of meetings.

Let me conclude, Mr. President, by reiterating our readiness to work with you, your team and other delegations in the effort to bring the Conference on Disarmament back to its substantive work.

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

Ms. Hakala (Finland): Let me start, Mr. President, by congratulating you on your presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. You have made a very promising and speedy start by advancing a decision on subsidiary bodies and coordinators and we commend you on your endeavour. We value in particular the fact that you proposed a single overarching decision which can take us further in our work.

On Monday, the Secretary-General asked us to intensify our efforts to find consensus on the way forward in the Conference on Disarmament. The draft decision contained in document CD/WP.619 that you have put forward is a promising basis for consensus. The draft proposes a special coordinator on emerging issues and new technologies. Instead of replicating the idea of a subsidiary body on the items 5–7 of the Conference's agenda, this would, in our opinion, both focus the discussion and give us space for a more cross-cutting approach. The discussion on working methods could be very useful and we stress the importance of balance among the regional groups when appointing the coordinators.

We appreciate the manner in which you have listened to delegations' concerns and tried to incorporate them into the draft decision. We find the draft both comprehensive and balanced and are willing to accept it as is.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Finland for her statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. The next speaker on the list is the Ambassador of Chile.

Mr. Eguiguren (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, allow me first of all to acknowledge, and thank you for, the work that you and your team have carried out so far during your presidency, and in particular for putting forward the draft decision before us today.

For years, we have been repeating that the Conference on Disarmament is the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum and emphasizing the need to preserve it by redoubling our efforts to strengthen and revitalize it. We would have preferred to have seen the adoption of a programme of work for the Conference. However, as this has not been possible because of a lack of political will and the years of stalemate, we have found, in subsidiary bodies and their interactions, a pragmatic way of trying to maintain a substantive dialogue, in the form of a deliberative role, within the Conference, but with a view to preparing to fulfil the Conference's negotiating mandate.

We appreciate that this draft was the result of a genuine effort to balance the interests of Member States, which we know is a highly complex task in these matters. With regard to paragraph 1 of the draft decision, we agree with the establishment of the four proposed subsidiary bodies. We believe that the issues they address, in addition to being fundamental, have been sufficiently defined by discussions from previous years, and therefore enjoy a certain level of maturity.

I recall, with regard to proposed subsidiary bodies 1 and 3, that Chile is participating in the United Nations groups of governmental experts on nuclear disarmament verification and the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

Concerning paragraph 4, we understand why the decision has been made to establish that the meetings will be informal. Without prejudice to the foregoing, we wish to put on record that we would have preferred formal meetings and thus to have avoided a repetition of the experience of previous years.

We are particularly interested in the proposal to appoint a special coordinator to examine the impact of emerging issues and new technologies on the work of the subsidiary bodies. Indeed, although these issues are not part of the Conference's traditional agenda, we cannot today avoid carrying out a specialized analysis of them, since they have the potential to have an impact, for better or for worse, on all the aspects to be addressed by the subsidiary bodies.

One of the characteristics of emerging issues and new technologies is their multidimensional nature, which means that they can be analysed from different perspectives and in different forums. There is therefore a need to avoid duplicating efforts with a view to adopting an inclusive approach, focusing on specific aspects of the content of the draft decision.

Regarding the appointment of a special coordination team on working methods and expansion of the membership, Chile has traditionally argued for the need to expand the membership of this forum in accordance with the criteria of non-discrimination and equitable geographical distribution. As to the analysis of working methods, we stand ready to participate in the discussions, provided that their purpose is to achieve the end for which the Conference was created, namely the negotiation of multilateral instruments in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation.

Mr. President, I would like to thank you again for submitting the draft decision. We believe that we are running out of time and that there is an urgent need to begin work as soon as possible. On this understanding, we call for flexibility and a spirit of cooperation in the interests of adopting a decision by consensus.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Chile for his statement. The next on the list of speakers is the Ambassador of Brazil.

Mr. De Aguiar Patriota (Brazil): Mr. President, first of all, allow me to put on record our support of your initiatives and your proposals for substantive work in this session of the Conference on Disarmament. We have indicated our flexibility to work along different possible lines. What you have proposed seems to us a natural alternative to the full-fledged programme of work which we made a serious attempt to adopt during the presidency of the Ambassador of Ukraine. This is, as we see it, a follow-on to the 2018 decision so it is not a mere repetition. It would take us further, as you have clearly indicated that we will resume our discussion on the basis of adopted reports from last year and we will build upon that as a starting point. Accordingly, it seems clear to me that what we are seeking to do here is to go further than we were able to go last year.

We have to recognize the different natures of the issues: that, in my view, is how you have set out the basis for our discussions and work. We therefore have flexibility even if this is not necessarily the ideal solution, given what the rules of procedures indicate that we should be doing. On the other hand, however, I believe that this is a realistic alternative, given the conditions and the time frame which require us to make a move early on during the course of the year. If we are not in a position to adopt something on these lines, I believe that we might face wasting yet another year, another full year, of work.

I would like to make a couple of comments, which do not mean that I am not in a position to support this: they are just general comments. I believe that it would be safer to work along the lines of the items of the Conference's agenda, the adopted items. If we attempt to be more specific than what the items indicate, this might perhaps lead us to greater hurdles and difficulties than if we simply work along the lines of each item. That is the way we did it last year. The documents that you mentioned under each subsidiary body

have also been framed in accordance with the wording of the items. This means that, last year, we did not attempt to rewrite items of the Conference's agenda.

The idea of discussing nuclear disarmament issues in a single basket is tempting but I do not believe that it will necessarily facilitate agreement because it will bundle together items that, as set out in the adopted agenda, are separate from one another. Perhaps, therefore, we should simply respect the existing agenda as it is.

Of course, there is perhaps a need to refine the wording that appears after the referencing of the documents, because there is a certain degree of cherry-picking in the words here. I note with particular concern subsidiary body 3, for example, of which I was a coordinator last year. Of course, if members are in agreement with the wording, then that is fine. If they are not, then we would probably need some fine-tuning relating to specific aspects of the issues that you have, as it were, highlighted under each of these bodies.

I believe that 10 sessions may be somewhat too many. You have indicated "up to 10", so I presume that we could perhaps have fewer than 10. I believe that this is something we might discuss when you present the timetable. The question of formal or informal settings is an important evolution from last year. Last year we did not have a chance to hold any formal sessions of the subsidiary bodies. If we could have a formal first session and a formal last session, I believe that it would be very helpful, because we can put on record positions to safeguard the red lines laid down by countries and that will facilitate agreement and nuance. We can also have greater clarity as to the degrees of consensus under each subsidiary body, as this was a matter with which we struggled last year when the issues were brought to the consideration of the plenary. There was no real clarity as to which reports had or had not achieved consensus. This, I believe, will really facilitate matters.

Turning now to the coordinators on the expansion of membership and the methods of work, I believe first, with regard to the expansion of membership, that the notion of geographic balance should be included and made clear. I believe that this must be a guiding principle. We should seek to retain such balance to the extent possible in these discussions. This is something to be kept in mind and we should perhaps make that clear. On both issues, if it were possible, it would be interesting to have some reference to past discussions. Perhaps we could have a list of the minutes of meetings when this was discussed in the Conference last year, so that we can refresh our memory as to the type of considerations that were made then and by whom, and so forth. That would perhaps serve as helpful supporting documentation for our deliberations.

You may count on my delegation to support you in this, however. As we do not have a great deal of time, we will not be insisting on any of these specific points. These are just general remarks.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Brazil for his statement and his proposals. I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa.

Mr. Mahomed (South Africa): Mr. President, I would like to thank you for your efforts to move the work of the Conference on Disarmament forward in a way that will assist in the adoption of a programme of work.

We are still working on the draft decision and will reserve our comments regarding the subsidiary bodies for later but would like to make some comments on the issue of the coordinators. We noted the comments made by member States regarding the appointment of coordinators. Our view is that the mandate and scope of the coordinators should be clearly defined as we do not want to end up once again in a situation that we become party to discussions that are of no relevance to the work of the Conference. This will not contribute to progress on issues related to the mandate of the Conference on Disarmament.

Regarding the draft decision contained in document CD/WP.619, we note the wording in the section that deals with special coordinators – in particular, paragraph 9, that speaks about working methods. We would like to know whether there is a common understanding of what is meant by working methods of the Conference on Disarmament. What does this encompass? We know that, over time, certain working methods have developed and become institutionalized. Essentially, we need to agree on what is on the table and what is off the table.

Paragraph 11 states that the coordinators “shall submit their reports summarizing the results of their consultations, and any commonalities or recommendations that may be reached by consensus, to the Conference no later than the final week of the second part of the 2019 session”. We would like to seek clarification on the words “shall” and “may”.

What will happen if the coordinators cannot reach consensus? “Shall” implies that they must submit reports. What reports will be submitted if there is no consensus? Will coordinators submit a report in their own capacities? And what will be the status of such reports?

The President: I thank the representative of South Africa for his statement. I would now like to give the floor the representative of Mexico.

Mr. Martínez Ruiz (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Mr. President. I would like to begin by warmly congratulating South Africa and Zimbabwe on their recent ratifications of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, respectively. Both ratifications represent important and very positive steps towards nuclear disarmament, and we hope that they will lead to both instruments entering into force soon.

My delegation appreciates the submission of the draft decision and recognizes the efforts that you, Mr. President, are making to facilitate the commencement of substantive negotiations within the Conference on Disarmament as soon as possible.

You can count on Mexico to make every effort to achieve this objective, but always within the limits imposed on us by the mandate of this Conference.

The position of Mexico on the appropriateness of establishing subsidiary bodies to take discussions further, but in a way that shirks this body’s main duty, which is to initiate the negotiation of legal instruments, is well known, and we expressed it clearly at the most recent plenary meeting.

Obviously, my delegation understands the complexities of adopting a programme of work and that we are at a self-imposed crossroads because of the degree of complexity and balance required, but my delegation still has the impression that this lack of balance does not amount to a lack of consensus to start negotiations on any issue at this time, as suggested in the letter that you circulated.

This is why I believe that we must not give up, however complex the situation may seem. We hoped that your text would help us to move towards a consensual solution, and, having read your proposal, we note that there is still some way to go.

Mexico is ready to continue working so that, under your presidency, we can lay the groundwork for discussions within the Conference on Disarmament in 2019. To this end, and with the reservations that I have expressed on instructions from my capital, I would like to make some preliminary observations, in the hope that, at the end of the consultations and negotiations, we will be able to agree on a decision that is more precise in terms of its approach and aims, and in which the items on the agenda of this Conference will be treated equitably and as being of equal relevance.

I would like to make the following points.

First, there must be a more direct link between the areas of competence of the subsidiary bodies and the agenda items. The biased approach and narrow titles do not reflect the broad context in which the items have been considered in the framework of the Conference on Disarmament and give the impression that some items are more important than others.

This does not mean that Mexico is not aware that more progress has been made on some issues than on others, but these differences can be reflected in the final outcome of the discussions, rather than in the delimitation of the scope of each body’s discussions. In a similar vein, the text is precise when it comes to some topics and overly general with regard to others. For example, it is not clear to my delegation what the material scope of the topic “principles of nuclear disarmament” is, why the scope of the topic of risk reduction in the context of nuclear disarmament is limited or why some of the issues assigned to subsidiary

body 3 are not sufficiently specified and contextualized. The items allocated to subsidiary body 4 are also unclear.

Three: we believe that the aims of the different subsidiary bodies should be similar. In this regard, we believe that the particular focus on additional measures and legal instruments referred to in relation to subsidiary body 4 could be replicated, *mutatis mutandis*, in subsidiary bodies 1 and 3.

Four: a key part of the draft decision is operative paragraph 2. We realise that the order of the three main objectives of the subsidiary bodies pursuant to decision CD/2199 was changed, but we consider that this has led to a failure to recognize the spirit of progressiveness that the draft seeks to encourage. We believe that the focus should already be on identifying the specific elements needed to negotiate effective measures, including legal instruments. The mandate must be defined with the ultimate goal of beginning negotiations in mind.

Five: we recognize that an effort has been made to hold formal opening and closing meetings, but we believe that is insufficient, and that there should be more formal meetings. Otherwise, these exercises will lack the rigour needed to lead us to the next stage of discussions.

Six: it seems to us that operative paragraph 7 should be supplemented in order to recognize that, in addition to commonalities and recommendations, the specific elements needed to negotiate effective measures, including legal instruments, should be agreed upon and reflected in the report. The only way to assess the progress made by the subsidiary bodies and the extent to which their establishment is useful and justified is by how close they bring us to the start of negotiations.

Seven: we welcome the proposed appointment of special coordinators on working methods and expansion of the membership, whose work is indispensable if we truly want to break the stalemate in the Conference. This is an issue that my country has raised on several occasions, and, although we regret the context in which the discussion on their appointment has taken place, we believe that it is an opportunity that we must seize.

Although it is not our preference, we can agree to the appointment of a single team of coordinators to deal with issues pertaining to both working methods and expansion of the membership, but on the understanding that each issue has its own unique dimension and should not be viewed from a *quid pro quo* perspective. Clear working parameters will also have to be established, since the appointment of a “troika” of coordinators will ensure that there is a range of perspectives, but not necessarily that the work will be efficient. This is why we have to be specific about how they will carry out their tasks.

Mr. President, my delegation will remain involved in the discussions and will follow up on them so that, constructively, but taking into account the interests of all delegations, progress can be made towards clear short-term goals, where the focus is on the centrality of the mandate of the Conference on Disarmament and not on a recurrent exercise of repetitive deliberations that keep the Conference on Disarmament occupied, but not working in accordance with its powers.

The President: I thank the representative of Mexico. I now give the floor to the representative of Australia.

Ms. Wood (Australia): Mr. President, I have been listening carefully to colleagues around the room. I believe that you have done a fine job on the draft decision and I am actually happy with it as it is but I believe that the process which we are undertaking now is to ensure that we all have ownership of this document, so it is a very important process. I would like just to reflect on the suggestions that have been made by colleagues because I believe that some good ideas have been put forward.

I believe that Ecuador found it to be pragmatic and balanced and Indonesia said that it really looks like a programme of work even though they would like to see a negotiating mandate. I agree with both of those comments. I believe that our colleague from Belarus made a very useful suggestion to the effect that a special coordinator on working methods could also look at best practices in other forums. I believe that we sometimes operate in

something of a bubble here and the seminar that we had yesterday really highlighted that, so I believe that that could be quite useful. I am not sure that you need to put that level of detail in the decision but I believe that it would be useful for the coordinators to take that approach. I believe that our United States colleagues made a useful suggestion about the opportunity to have both an informal and a formal session on working methods and expansion. A few colleagues made comments on the description of the focus for the various subsidiary bodies and also the need for whatever we do this year to be more than last year. I believe that Brazil and Mexico both made that comment. I find the clarity on the topics extremely useful. If whatever we do this year is going to be more than what we did last year, then our capitals are going to have to work harder than they did last year and we will need to give them time to think about these issues so we can prepare to have a real discussion.

I may not have properly understood the comment by my Indonesian colleague on rotations, so it would be good to have further clarity on that. I note the suggestion regarding the possible grouping of nuclear disarmament items. I tend to agree with my Brazilian colleague that it would probably be better to keep the four subsidiary bodies separate. Where Australia is concerned, we would like to see a separate subsidiary body on fissile material, while others may feel the same way about negative security assurances. I also note the comments on the agenda items and here my view would be that it is quite useful to have these set out as the core issues. That would be my preference.

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

Mr. Hwang (France) (*spoke in French*): Thank you, Mr. President. Good morning everyone. Firstly, I would like to thank you for your draft decision and congratulate you on the dynamism of your presidency, which demonstrates a genuine desire to move forward in a constructive fashion.

My delegation would also have liked there to be a genuine relaunch of the Conference on Disarmament and would have preferred the adoption of a programme of work. Incidentally, I would like to thank the Ukrainian Presidency for its efforts in this regard. However, we share your view that realism requires us to favour the option of establishing subsidiary bodies. For our delegation, this is most certainly not a default solution. Not only does this option of establishing subsidiary bodies enable the Conference to resume its substantive work, it also contributes to transcending political divides and overcoming procedural obstacles. It also enables the Conference to resume its mandate – which is a negotiating mandate – since this work will make it possible to prepare the ground for future agreements and facilitate a shared understanding of the issues that we must face. Moreover, I would remind you that that is how the Conference on Disarmament used to work when it functioned normally.

With regard to the draft decision itself, firstly I would like to say that, in our view, it provides an excellent basis on which we hope to be able to forge a consensus. We are satisfied with the general thrust of the draft decision you have submitted to us and the chosen structure of the proposal. Firstly, it is wise to focus on the four main topics by creating a subsidiary body on each of the first four agenda items. As we saw last year, the discussions on these various topics were intense, particularly the discussions about a treaty banning the production of fissile material for the manufacture of weapons and other nuclear explosive devices.

Secondly, there is clearly room for further discussion on the various topics you have chosen for the four subsidiary bodies to focus on, providing great opportunities for continued dialogue. I refer in particular to subsidiary body No. 1 on nuclear disarmament verification and on transparency and confidence-building measures. With regard to the second body, on a fissile material cut-off treaty, we continue to believe that this is the most mature topic and must remain our priority. The discussions on such a treaty should not only build on the work carried out last year within this framework, but also on the work carried out by the preparatory group. With regard to the third subsidiary body, on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, as you know, for my delegation, the issue of debris and the long-term viability of outer space activities is crucial. However, the issue of norms of behaviour is even more crucial. It is for that reason that we continue to believe that a policy

document, such as a code of conduct, would be the most realistic and appropriate solution to the challenges we face.

Thirdly, like others in this forum, we believe that it would be a good idea to have a coordinator for other emerging issues and new technologies. The discussions held last year within the framework of the fifth subsidiary body were very instructive, but we must recognize that those topics are continually changing and are at a lower level of maturity than the others. It is, therefore, absolutely critical that the groundwork is laid so that those topics can be addressed within the framework of a full-fledged subsidiary body.

Fourthly, we, like others, believe that the working methods and composition of the Conference on Disarmament are legitimate subjects for the Conference to consider. As we have said, we can be flexible about the implementation methods and your suggested solution of having a group of several coordinators seems wise to us, as it would ensure a balance.

Just briefly on the actual implementation: the holding of 10 meetings, referred to in paragraph 3, may seem an ambitious objective. We believe that 10 should actually be the bare minimum. Last year, we had seven sessions, which was not enough to finalize the reports. On the specific issue of the reports, referred to in paragraph 7 of the draft decision, ideally, we would have preferred the various reports of the subsidiary bodies to be adopted by consensus, it being understood that they should include commonalities and recommendations also approved by consensus. However, for the sake of compromise, we can accept your chosen solution, which separates the two aspects. In any event, it is important that the work carried out by the subsidiary bodies should be officially recorded in a report so that a record of it remains for future work.

In conclusion, we have a very good draft decision before us. It is still possible to make small amendments to it, in order to take into account the views of all the delegations. I would like to say that we support the principle of a single decision covering the issue of the subsidiary bodies and that of the special coordinators. We also believe that this draft ought to be adopted without delay. We are already behind compared to last year's schedule and cannot afford to miss another opportunity to resume the substantive work at the Conference this year.

Mr. President, you can count on the full commitment of France to participate constructively and substantially in this work which, we hope, can be implemented at the earliest opportunity.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of France for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. The next speaker on the list is the representative of Egypt.

Mr. Elsayed (Egypt): Mr. President, at the outset, allow me to congratulate you on the conclusion of a successful high-level segment under your presidency and to reiterate my sincere appreciation for the efforts that you have been conducting and for the draft decision that you have circulated. In addition, we would like to thank you and commend your early engagement with the Group of 21 and for taking into consideration in the new draft decision several remarks that were made by my delegation and other delegations during our meeting last week.

While we acknowledge the difficulty of adopting a balanced and comprehensive programme of work and recognize that your draft decision is the only practical and pragmatic solution to the question of advancing the work of the Conference, we would like to reiterate the need to adopt this decision in a manner that ensures the sustainability of the basic principles and tenets of the Conference and also its rules of procedure. We should strive towards preserving the Conference and its credibility and, while we value the proposal that you have submitted, we have the following observations.

First, we welcome your proposal to establish four separate subsidiary bodies on the four core agenda items of the Conference. We deem this format essential for any work with which the members of the Conference may agree to proceed during the 2019 session. At the same time, with regard to the proposed reporting mechanism, under which the coordinator of the subsidiary body is entrusted with producing a report of that body's work, there is no clarity regarding the manner in which such reports will be agreed on between member

States. We believe that the reports of the subsidiary bodies should be agreed on by all member States in accordance with the rules of procedure.

In this regard, we would like to propose adding, in paragraph 7, the agreed wording from the decision contained in document CD/2119, which states that the report on the progress achieved and agreed on in each subsidiary body would be submitted by its coordinator to the Conference, through the President, for adoption and due reflection in the annual report of the Conference on Disarmament to the General Assembly.

Second, in paragraph 1, we need a direct link and reference to the agenda items to be discussed under each subsidiary body. This point has already been mentioned by several other delegations.

Third, on items 5, 6 and 7, we believe that we need to build on the work performed by subsidiary body 5 last year, maintaining the same format of the subsidiary body with a view to continuing the discussion between delegations on a possible way forward. While we are not of the view that work on these agenda items will be advanced by the appointment of a coordinator entrusted with examining emerging issues, we are open to further discussion on a format that would be acceptable to all delegations for continued work on those items.

Fourth, in paragraph 9, which proposes the appointment of a troika of special coordinators to be entrusted with examining the working methods and membership of the Conference, we very much appreciate the inclusive nature of the proposal, in particular in designating a small group of coordinators. At the same time, we need to include wording to ensure balanced geographical representation within the troika. In this connection, we propose to entrust the regional groups with nominating their interested candidates to represent them in this troika.

Fifth, in paragraph 3, we value the proposal to increase the substantive work of the Conference to as many as 10 meetings per subsidiary body, compared to 7 last year. At the same time, I would like to reiterate the point that had been already raised in our previous meeting by several delegations, including my own, that fewer, more focused discussions within the subsidiary bodies would be more beneficial and would be conducive to better preparation and active participation by all delegations which might have different levels of capacity.

Lastly, Mr. President, we have full confidence in you and your team and we stand ready to assist you in achieving a productive outcome under your presidency.

The President: I thank the representative of Egypt for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. The next speaker on the list is the Ambassador of China.

Mr. Li Song (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): First, on behalf of the Chinese delegation I would like to thank you and the secretariat for the great efforts you have made to ensure the success of this week's high-level segment of the Conference on Disarmament. During this week of the high-level meeting, senior officials from over 30 countries have, here in the Council Chamber, set out many insightful and profound views about the international security situation and the work of the Conference, fully reflecting the importance and aspirations placed by the international community on the work we do here.

I listened attentively to each intervention, and I think the following two main points stand out. The first is that all parties believe that, in the current serious and grim international situation, it is crucial to defend the multilateral arms control system and move the international arms control process forward. The Conference's importance as the sole multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament is especially marked at this historic juncture, as Geneva has been a centre for disarmament diplomacy for 100 years and it is now 40 years since the Conference on Disarmament was established. It is thus all the more important to break the long-standing deadlock and reinvigorate the Conference's work. Secondly, everyone expects the Conference to comprehensively push forward substantive work on all questions, on the basis of a balanced agenda. Specifically, the Conference should draw fully on the successful experience and practices of last year and set up the relevant subsidiary bodies to carry out its work in accordance with the rules of procedure, which call for consensus. When the time is right and conditions allow, it is in the common

interest of all members of the Conference and of the international community to start negotiations on treaties.

It is the responsibility of the Conference and the common goal of the entire membership to reach a comprehensive and balanced programme of work and to negotiate and draft international legal instruments on the relevant issues. As you stated in your letter of 21 February to member States, at this stage, the Conference's membership has not begun negotiations to reach a consensus on any subject. Yet all parties have expressed the desire to continue pushing forward the Conference's substantive work this year and their very high hopes of doing so during your presidency. If the Conference can agree on a programme of work in a timely manner, especially if it can do so before the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference, that will mark a concrete step towards substantive work. We would thus be able to send a strong positive signal to the international community and demonstrate the resolve of the Conference's members to live up to its aspirations and to spare no effort to move forward.

Mr. President, the Chinese delegation has carefully considered the draft decision you put forward last week; it has taken part in the consultations that you and your team have organized and has exchanged views on the draft decision with a number of member States. We have paid special attention to the positions expressed by the various parties during the high-level segment. We believe that everyone agrees with the general direction you put forward, which is to set up subsidiary bodies; however, relatively big differences remain between the various delegations on the main agenda items, priorities and specific methods of work and arrangements. Your draft decision still needs to be improved in terms of balance, especially in respect of the definition of the subsidiary bodies' mandates or scopes of discussion. Many colleagues have already brought up the problem of cherry-picking. Frankly, cherry-picking is, I am afraid, not the best way to proceed, as many delegations will believe that a lot of cherries will be left on the tree and will ask why they are not being put in the basket. In reality, everyone will pocket the cherries they themselves prefer. So we would be best off leaving all the cherries for the subsidiary bodies to deal with.

As for how to move ahead, I have the following ideas that I would like to submit for everyone's consideration.

First, regarding the mandates of the subsidiary bodies, the decision reached by the Conference last year on the establishment of the subsidiary bodies already fully addressed the concerns of all the different parties.

(spoke in English)

I would like to remind colleagues that, in the decision that we made last year regarding subsidiary bodies, the wording is open-ended, and that wording already leaves enough room for continued and in-depth deliberation in subsidiary bodies. I also noted that the delegations of Indonesia and Brazil, together with certain other delegations, also remarked that they would prefer these subsidiary bodies to be set up in accordance with the Conference's agenda rather than with specific outstanding issues. I believe that this idea is particularly relevant because the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament is much broader than certain specific issues and those issues cannot replace its agenda. For that reason, my delegation would also prefer us to set up the subsidiary bodies in accordance with the Conference's agenda. Accordingly, I personally believe that, if we can agree on a decision which is similar to last year's decision, that might be the swiftest way for us to decide on the specific working arrangement for this year and it might also be the only way out. That is my first suggestion.

(spoke in Chinese)

Secondly, regarding the establishment of coordinators, the Chinese delegation has noted that, apart from the core agenda items, the President's draft decision would also establish two coordinators for emerging technologies and on expansion of the membership and the improvement of working methods. The related content in the draft decision has already brought about some discord and controversy. Especially during the high-level segment, the evoking of questions unrelated to the Conference's work unnecessarily

affected the normal work of the Conference, which many member States found regrettable and disappointing. China does not approve of this way of proceeding and does not believe that its advocacy by the States in question can resonate with the entire Conference's membership. We have always believed that the purpose of opening discussions among the Conference's member States about expansion of the membership and the improvement of working methods is to strengthen effective multilateralism and advance the Conference's openness, tolerance, democracy and transparency, improve its observance of the principle of consensus and consolidate the authority and status and authority of the Conference.

(spoke in English)

I mean these kinds of discussions: at the current stage we do not believe it necessary for the Conference to reach consensus on these issues. I believe that this might offer a possible way out. These discussions are necessary but consensus is not necessary for the time being.

(spoke in Chinese)

We therefore believe that, as the Conference establishes the respective subsidiary bodies to carry out substantive work, it can appoint a coordinator for expansion of the membership and the improvement of working methods, who can organize and assist member States in holding open, in-depth and extensive discussions on these topics. They may be discussions, or they may be debates. For the time being, such a discussion or debate should not be aimed at reaching consensus on these issues. This is a thought worth considering.

In addition, during the high-level segment, a number of States once again called for the Conference to consider the relationship between emerging technologies and the international disarmament agenda. Joining numerous States in their views, China believes that this year it is once again necessary to set up subsidiary bodies on these and related issues, following last year's practice.

In short, China is prepared to work closely with all parties to adopt the draft decision during your presidency and to achieve the aim of starting the relevant work.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of China for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Azarsa (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. President, allow me at the outset to thank you and your team for having prepared the thoughtful draft text that we have before us and to assure you of our delegation's support and full cooperation.

In previous sessions, we have initially shared our viewpoints and these have been duly registered. I would like, however, to make some general comments on this draft, as follows. Where the proposed text as a whole is concerned, my delegation believes that a balanced approach is needed. We need to have a shorter, more concise and more focused document and, to this end, some deletions and some insertions and additions are required. As for the subsidiary bodies, one really crucial element is a legally binding instrument for subsidiary bodies 1, 2 and 3, so that the text would read "elements of a legally binding instrument for the total elimination of nuclear weapons" for subsidiary body 1 and "elements of a legally binding instrument" for subsidiary bodies 2 and 3. In the paragraphs on these three subsidiary bodies, the further articulation of ideas, in particular in the last two lines of each paragraph, could easily be deleted because, in my delegation's view, they include certain complexities and, with these deletions, the text could be greatly improved.

For subsidiary body 4, my delegation believes that the provision of assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is an element that should to be added in the text.

As for the coordinators on agenda items 5, 6 and 7, we are not yet convinced as to the necessity and relevance of the special coordinators or even just of coordinators, in particular with regard to the working methods.

Mr. President, our detailed views will be submitted once we have received clear instructions from our capital. I will come back to you in this chamber when we go through the text paragraph by paragraph or during the drafting process.

The President: I thank the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran for his statement and his proposals. I would now like to give the floor to the representative of Pakistan.

Mr. Jadoon (Pakistan): Mr. President, we thank you for circulating the draft decision set out in document CD/WP.619. We agree with the sobering but realistic assessment that you provide in the covering letter, namely: "There is no consensus for launching negotiations on any issue at this time". In this situation, holding a substantive discussion on all agenda items, without any preconditions and without any predisposition towards particular outcomes, would seem to be the next best alternative. Such discussions have been held on a regular basis in the past and have proved valuable for developing a better understanding of one another's positions and concerns. Your proposal provides a good basis for once again putting in place such a framework for substantive discussions in the Conference. We have forwarded your proposal to our capital and can share some initial feedback at this stage.

We note that the draft decision differs in many respects from the one adopted last year on the establishment of subsidiary bodies. In some cases, the change is based on practical considerations and lessons learned from last year's experience, and are therefore welcome. For instance, the suggestion to divide the reports of the subsidiary bodies into two sections – the first on commonalities and recommendations to be agreed upon by consensus and the second setting out factual details – could prove more efficient than last year's approach. It must, however, be made clear and explicit in the draft decision that the coordinator's report will be factual and under his or her own responsibility, presented in a personal capacity and without prejudice to national positions. That is not clearly stated in the present draft.

Some of the other differences proposed by you are of a more substantive nature. Let me elaborate.

First, you propose that the subsidiary bodies be established on the so-called four core issues and not on the agenda items, as was the case last year. We would prefer to revert to last year's successful approach by using the same formula, as already mentioned by colleagues from Belarus, Indonesia, Brazil, China and others. Another interesting point was made by the Ambassador of Brazil regarding the reference to the reports under the mandates for the various subsidiary bodies. Those reports were indeed on the agenda items in accordance with way that those items were framed last year. If we are to build on last year's work, and to make further progress on that basis, it would be only natural to use the same form and format.

Second, some of the topics selected for discussion in each subsidiary body might not be necessarily comprehensive and exhaustive. These lists need to be reviewed. In the case of subsidiary body 2, the list must include goals and objectives. In the case of subsidiary body 3, a reference would be appropriate to prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and to the prohibition on the use or threat of use of force against outer space objects, while avoiding topics that fall within the ambit of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. For subsidiary body 1 and subsidiary body 2, the lists need to be rationalized and expanded considerably. Another option could be to do away with the listing of topics altogether.

Third, a distinction has been made between the mandates for subsidiary bodies 1 and 3 on the one hand and subsidiary bodies 2 and 4 on the other. While the former two, 1 and 3, refer to "options for negotiations", this phrase does not appear in the case of subsidiary bodies 2 and 4. This omission needs to be rectified. Without this addition, the mandate of the different subsidiary bodies will not be evenly balanced.

Fourth, the mandate for the vital discussion on new and emerging issues has been relegated in importance, by assigning these issues to a special coordinator instead of placing them under a dedicated subsidiary body. This too needs to be rectified. This cluster

of issues, as highlighted most recently by the Secretary-General, merits a dedicated subsidiary body. The issues need more and not less attention as implied by the draft decision.

Fifth, special coordinators have been proposed for reviewing the methods of work and expansion of membership. My delegation does not see any linkage between the impasse in the Conference on Disarmament and its working methods. We are, therefore, still studying the utility and the implications of reviewing the Conference on Disarmament's methods of work and rules of procedure and the specific wording to that effect proposed by you in the draft decision.

In addition to these five points, the wording in the draft decision relating to the consideration and approval of the respective reports by the subsidiary bodies, and their further adoption by the Conference on Disarmament, needs to be clarified and made unambiguous. The current text states that the reports shall be presented by the coordinators "at the final formal meeting of the subsidiary body" but does not specify what will become of them subsequently, including any possible action by the Conference.

Mr. President, we stand ready to engage with you and with other fellow member States in tackling these issues. You have provided us with a very solid starting point. We greatly appreciate the informal consultations and outreach which you have carried out. We assure you of our continued constructive cooperation in arriving at a consensus text leading to the resumption of substantive work in the Conference on Disarmament as soon as possible. We remain committed to that. We have full confidence in your abilities to guide us towards that objective.

The President: I thank the representative of Pakistan for his statement and his proposals and the kind words addressed to the Chair. Next on my list is the representative of Turkey.

Mr. Ağacikoğlu (Turkey): Mr. President, it is indeed a pleasure to take the floor under your presidency for the first time. I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference. Please rest assured of our delegation's support and cooperation. I also take this opportunity to thank the Ukrainian delegation for its tireless efforts to provide this Conference with a programme of work. As Minister Çavuşoğlu underlined in his statement this Monday, it is our common responsibility to make use of this important platform and we need to start agreeing on a programme of work.

We also thank you for the draft decision. Listening carefully to the statements made by Conference members since the start of the 2019 session, it is clear that the shared expectation of the Conference is that, in the absence of a programme of work, it should continue its substantive work this year with this decision. In this vein, we believe that the draft decision that you circulated among the members of the Conference has many aspects leading in the right direction. I would like to impart our preliminary views on the draft.

In common with many other delegations, we consider the subsidiary bodies which were established in 2018 and their work as a rare and exceptional achievement in the contemporary history of the Conference on Disarmament. The discussions in the subsidiary body meetings were thought-provoking and enabled most of our delegations to gain a better understanding of the issues at hand. Beyond this, we believe that the most important aspect of the subsidiary bodies was their consensus-based reports. These reports are the tangible results of the work accomplished by the subsidiary bodies. With these reports, as we can see in your draft, we now have a sound basis upon which to build our discussions. This is what everyone would agree is a step forward. It is of utmost importance that the Conference should maintain the same understanding this year regarding the establishment of subsidiary bodies and adoption of consensus-based reports to carry our discussions to the next session of the Conference on Disarmament. In that context, we believe that subsidiary body 5 must continue its work this year as well.

We had insightful presentations from the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research and other institutions and academics in 2018. I personally thank them for sharing their expertise with us. In 2019, however, we would prefer to limit the number of such presentations and to have more expert participation from our capitals. We believe that the

allocation of 10 sessions to each subsidiary body is overwhelming. We might retain the even allocation of time in paragraph 3 but encourage coordinators to finish their work early. As I have indicated before, in paragraph 7, the consensus should also be sustained on the report of the subsidiary body and not only on any commonalities or recommendations. Besides, it should be carefully indicated that the report would be that of the subsidiary body and not the coordinator's.

The Conference has been suffering from arbitrary linkages created between agenda items. If we could have started the negotiation process on the most natural issues and, in the meantime, tried hard to prepare the other agenda items, I believe that we would now have been at a much advantageous level. Some of the delegations which took the floor before us cautioned that the Conference might find itself on a dangerous path if we now create parallelism between substance and procedure. In the coming years, such parallelism could be a heavy burden for the Conference. We therefore propose that there be a separate draft decision for discussion of the procedural issues.

The President: I thank the representative of Turkey for his statement and his proposals. I indicated earlier, colleagues, that I would give any delegation who wished the chance to express their views in an informal setting. Would delegations find that useful at this stage? I give the floor to the Russian Federation.

Mr. Deyneko (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Yesterday, in this room, the Permanent Representative of Russia set out the fundamental Russian stance on the draft decision of the Conference on Disarmament prepared by you, Mr. President, and your colleagues. We ask you to regard this as the Russian Federation's official contribution to your efforts. As far as additional explanations and arguments aimed at considering an alternative are concerned, I would like to deal with that at the informal setting.

The President: I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Cuba.

Mr. Delgado Sánchez (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Mr. President. Our delegation would also like to take the floor in an informal setting.

The President: I thank the representative of Cuba and I now give the floor to the Ambassador of the United States.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): Mr. President, very quickly, on the record, I would just like to make clear that my delegation cannot agree to separate decisions on so-called substantive agenda items and working methods and membership expansion.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of the United States.

Colleagues, I now propose that we suspend the meeting while we move into an informal setting. The meeting is suspended.

The meeting was suspended at 12.20 p.m. and resumed at 12.55 p.m.

The President: The meeting is resumed. Colleagues, thank you very much for your statements in our formal and informal sessions this morning. I would like to invite you back at 3 p.m. this afternoon to continue our discussion on the draft decision before you.

The meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.