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Sixty-second session

First Committee

17th meeting

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Official Records

The Chairperson: Mr. Badji (Senegal)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda items 88 to 105 (continued)

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

The Chairperson (*spoke in French*): Before continuing our debate on questions of regional disarmament and security, I shall give the floor to the representatives of the Russian Federation and the United States of America, who have requested to make statements on the agenda items concerning other disarmament measures and international security.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The delegations of the Russian Federation and the United States of America have distributed to members of the First Committee today the text of the joint Russian-American statement on the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of their Intermediate-range and Shorter-range Missiles (INF Treaty). In that regard, the Russian delegation would like to make the following statement.

The publishing of the joint statement by Russia and the United States marks the twentieth anniversary of the signing of the INF Treaty, which banned medium-range missiles, with ranges between 1,000 to 5,500 kilometres, and shorter-range missiles, with ranges between 500 and 1,000 kilometres. It would be hard to overstate the historic significance of that

international legal document, since it marked a serious step towards true nuclear and missile disarmament in the framework of implementing article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

By 1 June 1991, the Soviet Union had already destroyed 1,846 intermediate and shorter-range missiles and 825 launching devices for them, in accordance with the INF Treaty, along with all supporting infrastructure and supplementary equipment. By the same date, the United States had eliminated 848 missiles of intermediate and short range, 289 launching devices for them and the infrastructure that supported them.

The INF Treaty opened up the way for the future Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (START I). Thus, we reduced the dangerously high level of confrontation between the two leading nuclear Powers and made it possible to move forward towards building mutual trust and overcoming the effects of the cold war. The concluding of the INF Treaty has enabled us to also considerably reduce international tensions, especially in Europe.

As is underlined in the joint statement, Russia and the United States stand convinced that, under the present conditions, the Treaty maintains its significance today and reiterate their joint support of that document.

The joint statement, which is addressed to all Member States at the sixty-second session of the General Assembly, indicates our countries' concern with the situation taking shape as regards the

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proliferation of intermediate and shorter-range missiles. Indeed, an increasing number of States are acquiring or seeking to acquire the technology necessary for the manufacturing of such missiles and adding them to their armaments. We are faced with a paradoxical situation in which the INF Treaty, which does not have an expiry date, is limiting only a small number of States — primarily Russia and the United States — in their activities.

In order to put an end to that worrisome trend, which heightens international tensions, the Russian Federation and the United States call on all interested countries to discuss the possibility of making the provisions of the INF Treaty universal in nature. Such an agreement would address the current reality and would further the nuclear and missile non-proliferation regime. We believe that renunciation of intermediate and short-range missiles, leading to future elimination of that class of missiles and the cessation of associated programmes, could help to elevate the role of the Treaty as a tool for increasing international security and strategic stability.

Mr. Morote (Peru), Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.

In conclusion, I would like to draw attention to the fact that the Russian Federation and the United States, in the document circulated today, stated that we stand prepared to do our utmost and to work on this issue together with all interested countries in order to prevent proliferation of intermediate and shorter-range missiles and to contribute to strengthening peace around the world. We are counting on a constructive reaction from Member States to our joint initiative.

Ms. Rocca (United States): I am pleased to take the floor today to join my Russian colleague in introducing the joint United States-Russian Federation statement on the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of their Intermediate-range and Shorter-range Missiles (INF Treaty).

The INF Treaty was a significant moment in the relationship between the United States and what was then the Soviet Union. It was negotiated and signed at the height of the cold war and served to reduce tensions through the increased transparency that accompanied the elimination of that class of weapons. That transparency was based on a system of

information exchanges, on-site inspections and monitoring of missile production facilities.

The cold war era, during which the INF Treaty was concluded, was dominated by two Powers, with the world focused on the weapons in the arsenals of those two Powers. While other States possessed such missiles, the threat from those weapons received little attention in the shadow of the super-Power confrontation. Today's world is far different. The end of the cold war has not seen a lessening of proliferation generally, and certainly not in the proliferation of missiles. Every day the number of those missiles of a range covered by the INF Treaty increases, both quantitatively and qualitatively. The United States and the Russian Federation are concerned with that trend and believe that greater attention must be paid to the issue in order to ensure regional stability throughout the world. That is why we are making the joint statement today on the importance of focusing attention on the dangers inherent in the proliferation of those weapons.

Looking back, it is easy to see the contribution the INF Treaty has made to international peace and security. As we look forward, we believe that the Treaty can continue to contribute to international peace and security. It is our fervent hope that others will join us in making that hope a reality.

The Acting Chairperson: As the Chairperson mentioned yesterday, we will begin this morning's discussion by listening to the final statements on regional disarmament and security. After that, we will have an informal exchange with the panel on disarmament machinery. Following the thematic discussion on disarmament machinery, we will revert to our list of speakers on conventional weapons.

Mr. Perazza (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is a pleasure for our delegation to see you chairing the First Committee, Sir. Uruguay will make two statements under this agenda item on behalf of the States members of the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) and associated States, the first on confidence-building at the regional level and the second on disarmament and regional security.

I have the honour of making the following statement on behalf of MERCOSUR and its associated States, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and my own country, Uruguay.

MERCOSUR and its associated States believe that confidence-building measures are an important tool for achieving global peace and security and that they supplement efforts to achieve disarmament and non-proliferation. Confidence-building measures aim at reducing uncertainty and erroneous perceptions of the behaviour of States, thus diminishing the risk of military confrontation. We are convinced that the implementation and strengthening of such measures not only will help to prevent conflicts, but also will provide an effective tool with which, thanks to greater transparency and cooperation in the field of defence and security, it will be possible to foster better integration in the political, economic and cultural spheres.

Our region has been a pioneer in implementing such measures, and we have witnessed their benefits in strengthening peace and building democracy in the Americas by making it possible to have greater transparency and dialogue among the countries of the hemisphere. For our countries, confidence- and security-building measures have become key components that cannot be replaced and have been developed in parallel with security institutions throughout their history. We have also acknowledged that new confidence-building measures must be developed and implemented in order to tackle the multidimensional nature and scope of security. We have indeed agreed on the need to develop non-military measures to supplement the activities and initiatives undertaken by other forums in order to contribute to improving trust and confidence among States.

Confidence-building measures are dynamic. They are changed or amended depending on the particular situations of the States implementing them, with full respect for the norms and principles of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations. We therefore consider it important to transmit our bilateral, subregional and regional experiences in order to help shape similar experiences in other regions.

On the basis of that conviction, since the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly, MERCOSUR and its associated States have actively worked to support the resolution presented by Argentina on information on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms. Resolutions 59/92, 60/82 and 61/79 were adopted by consensus with a very high number of sponsors, and the issue will be considered again at the sixty-third session. In that connection, we

encourage States to make active use of the computerized database established in accordance with those resolutions, which makes it possible to consult periodically on the progress made during the decade on the global implementation of those measures. We believe that this tool will help to consolidate an additional transparency mechanism in the United Nations, and we reiterate our request to the Secretary-General to maintain this database and to assist Member States, at their request, in organizing seminars, courses and workshops aimed at enhancing the knowledge of new developments in this field.

We would also like to stress that the regional seminar on current initiatives in the area of conventional weapons, which was organized by Argentina with the cooperation of the Netherlands and the United Kingdom in July of this year and in which representatives from the Latin American and Caribbean region participated, recognized the regional progress made in the field of conflict-building measures in conventional weapons. Participants also pointed out that their refinement and implementation had helped to ensure a stable and peaceful hemisphere. Additionally, there was recognition that they had been instrumental in promoting cooperation among countries of the region in order to cope with such non-traditional threats as illicit trafficking in firearms, drug trafficking and terrorism.

Transparency in armaments is a key element of the confidence-building measures. At the regional level, we are continuing our efforts to achieve full implementation of the Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Weapons Acquisitions, while, at the global level, we will persist in our attempts to achieve universalization of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. It is also relevant to say that positive synergies must be promoted between the two instruments to ensure that progress in one area can be reflected in the other, particularly bearing in mind the periodic reviews of the Register and the next conference of States parties to the Convention, which will take place in 2009.

To conclude, MERCOSUR and its associated States would like to renew their commitment to the development and implementation of confidence-building measures in order to strengthen their common effort to move forward in disarmament and non-proliferation, while ensuring at the same time the well-being of their citizens.

I should like now to pass to the second MERCOSUR statement, on disarmament and regional security.

MERCOSUR and its associated States wish to congratulate the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, headquartered in Lima, Peru, on its 20 years of existence and to express their gratitude for its support to so many subregional and regional disarmament projects with a clear focus on development. This body of experience and activities has been instrumental in encouraging the States of the region to strengthen their commitment to international peace and security. We should recall that this regional centre is the only one of the three offices of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs to include in its mandate not only the implementation of measures to foster peace and disarmament but also the promotion of economic and social development.

This additional mandate has enabled the Centre to implement initiatives of States that go beyond disarmament in the strictest sense. As a result, it has been possible to carry out activities with a broad-based vision designed to ensure that issues of peace and disarmament are closely linked to the sustainable development and comprehensive security of member States.

In this matter, the Centre has worked closely with a number of United Nations agencies and with other regional and subregional organizations. We would also draw attention to the cooperation agreement to create synergies between the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, INTERPOL and the Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean in combating illicit trafficking in small arms.

Over the past 20 years, the Centre has helped the States of the region to: launch disarmament initiatives, integrating every day more effectively the issue of sustainable development with disarmament; promote and implement multilateral instruments on disarmament, the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and small arms, including the establishment of a regional network of assistance and protection against chemical weapons designed to provide assistance to States with respect to the implementation of article X of the Chemical Weapons Convention; set standards for confidence- and security-building;

promote ways and means to improve existing controls in the illicit trade of firearms, munitions and explosives and prevent this illicit trade; and, lastly, encourage peace education, among other activities.

The Centre also provides a forum in which the States of the region can discuss disarmament and non-proliferation issues with a view to adopting common positions on them.

We reaffirm the need for strict compliance with and full respect for the norms and principles of international law, in particular, the sovereignty of States, non-intervention in the internal affairs of States, prohibition of the use or threat of use of force, the peaceful settlement of disputes as well as human rights, international humanitarian law, democracy, international cooperation and faithful compliance with treaties, in accordance with the Charters of the United Nations and the Organization of American States, all of which constitute the foundation of peaceful coexistence among States.

We recognize that economic, social and cultural development are closely connected to peace and international security. In this context, the adoption of confidence- and security-building measures, as we mentioned in our first statement, constitutes a major contribution to transparency, mutual understanding, regional security and the achievement of development goals.

MERCOSUR and its associated States reaffirm that democracy is essential for social, political and economic development. In this connection, we emphasize the importance of the free and democratic presidential, legislative and local elections which took place peacefully on 29 April 2007 in Haiti. These elections represent a renewal of political leadership in that country.

We recognize the jurisdiction and the main responsibility of the Government and people of Haiti in all areas related to the stabilization of their country. We stress the role of regional organizations in the current stabilization and reconstruction process in Haiti. We also wish to encourage the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti to work closely with the Organization of American States and the Caribbean Community.

Finally, MERCOSUR and its associated States express their faith in the United Nations and its Charter

as the indispensable foundations of a more peaceful, prosperous and just world.

Mr. Obisakin (Nigeria): On behalf of the African Group, I am taking the floor to make some clarifications on our draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.24 on the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa.

Africa has specifically mandated me to speak and correct an erroneous impression created yesterday, 24 October, by the report of the Chief of the Regional Disarmament Branch. The Centre is a United Nations centre located in Lomé, Togo, but it is in serious financial difficulties. For instance, it only has one Director and cannot even pay a secretary who could take messages for the Director whenever he is out of the office. It runs solely on ad hoc money received for projects. It has relied on voluntary donations and, as most representatives are pretty well aware, the Secretary-General's report states that it cannot function in a sustainable manner with funds that are never forthcoming. It needs a regular United Nations allocation of funds. The maximum sum involved is quite small.

Africa is therefore seriously requesting members' understanding in adopting our draft resolution with a view to obtaining a budget at the appropriate United Nations quotas. As an Arab-African proverb says,

(spoke in French)

the true source of water can be found only during the dry season. It is a dry season for the United Nations Regional Centre in Lomé. We need help to find a good source of water.

(spoke in English)

The true source of a spring can be discovered only during the dry season. It is a dry season for the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament, of which we have spoken so much. We count on members' understanding.

The Chairperson *(spoke in French)*: We have thus concluded our consideration of the regional disarmament and security cluster.

We will now begin our thematic discussion on disarmament machinery. In that connection, we will first convene an informal panel discussion, to be followed by statements and the introduction of draft resolutions on that cluster.

The meeting was suspended at 10.45 a.m. and resumed at 12.35 p.m.

Mr. Rachmianto (Indonesia): My delegation would just like to make a clarification on procedural matters. We call the attention of the Committee to a technical error in document A/C.1/62/CRP.4, entitled "Action on draft resolutions and decisions under disarmament and international security agenda items", which was distributed yesterday morning.

In that document, draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.18, entitled "Effects of the use of armaments and ammunitions containing depleted uranium", was incorrectly placed under cluster 1, "Nuclear weapons", when it should have been included instead under cluster 6, "Other disarmament measures and international security". The draft resolution was introduced formally by my delegation on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement yesterday morning, and my delegation therefore requests the immediate correction of document A/C.1/62/CRP.4 and the publication of a revised version of that document in which draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.18 is incorporated under cluster 6.

The Chairperson *(spoke in French)*: I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Sareva (Secretary of the Committee): We will indeed reflect the correction made by the representative of Indonesia in a revised version of document A/C.1/62/CRP.4, which will be issued in the very near future.

Also, at the request of the sponsors, we will move another document — A/C.1/62/L.16 — from cluster 5 to cluster 6.

Finally, there is a typographical on page 3 of document A/C.1/62/CRP.4, following the reference to document A/C.1/62/L.17. That, of course, is not a decision, but rather a resolution. That error will be corrected in the revised version of document A/C.1/62/CRP.4.

The Chairperson *(spoke in French)*: I call on the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.11.

Mr. Hamoui (Syrian Arab Republic) *(spoke in Arabic)*: It is my pleasure to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.11, "Report of the Conference on Disarmament", on behalf of South Africa, Spain,

Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland and the Syrian Arab Republic.

The form and content of the draft resolution are in accordance with the established practice of previous years, in which the resolution has been adopted without a vote.

In its preambular part, the draft resolution notes the increased deliberations of the Conference on Disarmament in 2007. Unlike in 2006, this year the Conference adopted a substantive report on its 2007 session, which was submitted to the General Assembly. The report reflects the intensive work and determination of the Conference to pursue progress on substantive items. The sixth preambular paragraph takes note of the important progress made and the constructive contribution of members of the Conference that enabled it to consider seven substantial issues concerning the current international security climate and which are aimed at relaunching the disarmament negotiations. Experts from the capitals had participated in the discussions.

The Conference recognized the importance of messages sent by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ministers for Foreign Affairs and other high-level officials and high representatives on disarmament matters. Those messages expressed support for the Conference and its important role as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. This is reflected in the ninth preambular paragraph.

I am certain that the positive developments that the Conference witnessed in 2007, despite their modest nature, are nonetheless an important step towards revitalizing the Conference. They represent a constructive contribution towards revitalizing the disarmament machinery, as stated in the tenth preambular paragraph.

With regard to the operative paragraphs, paragraph 3 underscores the importance of redoubling efforts and having a greater number of consultations in order to come up with a substantive work plan as soon as possible during the 2008 session.

Paragraph 4 welcomes the decision of the Conference to request its current President, the Permanent Representative of Syria, and the incoming President, the Permanent Representative of Tunisia, to conduct consultations during the intersessional period in order to make recommendations, taking into account

all relevant proposals to the Conference as well as the opinions and discussions that took place in 2007, and to keep member States abreast of the outcomes of such consultations, as set forth in paragraph 57 of the report of the Conference.

I am happy to note that the incoming President, the Permanent Representative of Tunisia, who was present here — and it is thanks to his wisdom that this is so — has brought together the six Presidents for 2008 to start serious negotiations. That is a positive and promising sign for our upcoming work in the next year.

Lastly, on behalf of the countries that adopted the draft resolution, and in the light of the good progress made during the 2007 session, I express the hope that the Committee will adopt draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.11 without submitting it to the vote.

Mr. Pereira Gomes (Portugal): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and the countries that align themselves with this statement. The European Union strongly believes that a multilateral approach to security, including disarmament and non-proliferation, provides the best way to maintain international order. As a staunch supporter of multilateralism, the European Union sees the General Assembly and its First Committee, the Conference on Disarmament, the United Nations Disarmament Commission and the various international treaties with their bodies and review processes as mutually reinforcing.

In the light of the new threats to security, the disarmament machinery is playing an ever more important role, and we should all make every effort to preserve and, where possible, further strengthen this architecture.

Due to its universal character, this Committee provides one of the most important forums for discussion of non-proliferation and disarmament issues. The positive outcomes of the recent sessions of this Committee should not distract us from the need to further increase its effectiveness in addressing contemporary challenges to peace and security.

At this juncture, we would like to underline the wide support of the international community for the establishment of an Office for Disarmament Affairs with the task of fully implementing the relevant mandates, decisions and resolutions of the General

Assembly. We hope that the Secretary-General's reform initiatives lead to further revitalization of United Nations action in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. In this context the European Union welcomes the recent appointment of Ambassador Sergio de Queiroz Duarte as High Representative for Disarmament Affairs. Mr. Duarte has long-standing experience in disarmament and non-proliferation, and we look forward to working with him to give new impetus to our work.

The European Union recognizes the importance of the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral forum available to the international community for disarmament negotiations. We have consistently been committed to finding agreement on a programme of work capable of overcoming the current stalemate. We were encouraged by the constructive, structured and substantive discussions that took place during the first part of this year's session, and by the momentum created by these discussions. The momentum was developed as a direct result of the initiative taken jointly by the six Presidents of the Conference last year. The P-6 efforts have clearly been taken up and brought to an even higher level this year, leading to the appointment of coordinators for seven items of the Conference agenda and culminating in the presentation of a presidential draft decision for a programme of work (CD/2007/L.1), and two further documents (CD/2007/CRP.5 and CD/2007/CRP.6) issued after a serious, thoughtful and painstaking process in order to add clarity and to provide answers to questions raised by a few delegations with respect to document CD/2007/L.1.

These three documents have fostered our hope that the stalemate in the Conference could finally be overcome. We regret that no consensus on the documents has been established so far. We continue to urge the very few remaining States members of the Conference on Disarmament to join the consensus based on those documents in order for the Conference to resume its negotiating role in early 2008.

The United Nations Disarmament Commission is also an important part of the disarmament machinery. It is still our objective that the Disarmament Commission agree on recommendations for achieving the objectives of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms.

Notwithstanding the difficult issues and general political background in the areas of disarmament and non-proliferation, which have not been conducive to reaching a concrete outcome of the groups' work, the European Union's faith in a positive result at the end of the Disarmament Commission's three-year cycle remains unchanged. In fact, the Disarmament Commission had difficult, but substantive, debates which have brought us a step closer to a successful session next year.

Following the adoption of resolution 61/60, the European Union has constructively supported the creation of the Open-ended Working Group to consider the objectives and the agenda, including the possible establishment of a preparatory committee, for a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Notwithstanding this year's obstacles, the European Union, being a staunch supporter of effective multilateralism in the process of disarmament, arms control, non-proliferation and related international security matters, hopes that the working group's recommendations may serve as a good basis for further work on that issue.

The existing machinery has produced important obligations and commitments in the disarmament field. However, some problems relating to its functioning remain unsolved. The dynamics of today's international relations has put increased responsibility on our shoulders to adapt and update the existing acquis. What is essential for any machinery of this kind to function properly is political will to use it in good faith and full compliance with the obligations and commitments produced.

The EU will continue to develop efforts in a constructive manner in order to reach that aim.

Mr. Duncan (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom delegation has listened with considerable interest to the interventions made during the thematic discussions over recent days. As these meetings draw to a close, I would like to take the opportunity to make some brief general remarks about the mechanisms of disarmament.

It goes without saying that the United Kingdom subscribes to the general and detailed comments put forward by the European Union presidency on the individual items under debate.

Several speakers have referred to the speech given to the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace earlier this year by the former United Kingdom Foreign Secretary, Mrs. Margaret Beckett. The ideas and principles articulated by Mrs. Beckett in that speech remain the bedrock of the United Kingdom's policy on arms control and disarmament issues under our new Foreign Secretary, Mr. David Miliband. I would also like to draw colleagues' attention to Mr. Miliband's recent speeches — notably, his speech during the general debate of the General Assembly (see A/62/PV.9), his speech to celebrate the Eid and his speech at Chatham House this summer on the subject "New Diplomacy: the Challenges for Foreign Policy".

The beginning of the twenty-first century has indeed posed some very challenging strategic questions for the world community. However, it appeared to many observers that the dawn of this new century also coincided with a moment when the arms control and disarmament community had stumbled along the road, and there was concern that the very real progress achieved at the end of the twentieth century might be put in doubt.

As the United Kingdom Foreign Secretary said in his General Assembly address, all multilateral institutions need a strong sense of purpose and need to reflect the world as it is, not as it was. In terms of our own First Committee sense of purpose, it is worth recalling that the very first sentence of the United Nations Charter refers to "We the peoples of the United Nations, determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". Outside observers might deduce from this that the First Committee should have an important role to play. Would they conclude that we were indeed exercising that role responsibly, reflecting the world as it is, or could they be forgiven at times for wondering how much the real world penetrated into the debates in these august chambers or when we failed to follow our own agreed procedures for open-ended consultations on draft resolutions?

As the Foreign Secretary also commented, our international community depends on responsibilities as well as on rights. In addition to addressing the traumas of our fellow citizens around the world, the United Nations must be the place where we address longer-term threats. He also commented, in his speech at the Eid reception, that the challenges and dangers that the world faces — dangers of religious extremism, dangers of global inequality, dangers of climate change,

dangers of nuclear proliferation — require all of humanity, in all its diversity, to come together to address them, because they are shared challenges for the whole of our planet. No one can opt out of confronting the difficulties of religious extremism; no one can opt out of climate change; no one can opt out of the dangers of nuclear proliferation; and no one should opt out of facing the challenges of global inequality.

Beyond those crises, we also need to improve our capacity to prevent the emergence of conflict. That is the United Kingdom's vision of the responsibility to protect. A critical dimension is controlling the spread of weapons whose easy availability makes it so simple to set up militias and to provoke violence and mayhem. Last year, the First Committee voted overwhelmingly to take forward United Nations work towards an arms trade treaty. The United Kingdom Government will continue to press for the achievement of that goal.

From the foregoing, it should be clear that the United Kingdom views arms control and disarmament as intrinsically linked to the major challenges of the twenty-first century and as having both a direct and an indirect impact upon them. Our collective longer-term challenge is to adapt and strengthen multilateral institutions and networks, to renew their mandates, reform the way they work and enable them to adapt more quickly to new threats and new opportunities — in sum, to develop and re-energize the existing architecture, as well as looking seriously at whether new instruments and approaches might be necessary to achieve effective global governance in the absence of global government.

The United Kingdom Foreign Secretary has referred to the need to focus on both hard and soft power. Arms control is often seen as a hard-power issue. In the cold war, export controls existed to prevent one's adversary from gaining access to technology and thus military advantage. The twenty-first-century arms control agenda is more complex than that: it is an agenda in which, from the United Kingdom's perspective, diplomacy needs to bridge differences between nations, but also to reach out to civil society and business.

Those of us involved in multilateral arms control and disarmament need to adopt a more holistic approach, recognizing that we live in a world of globalization — a world where, more than ever

before, countries' interests are multifaceted and often interconnected.

Harnessing commercial and economic drivers has been shown to deliver results in the area of arms control. At last year's Review Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BTWC), very ably chaired by Pakistan's Ambassador Masood Khan, the breakthrough came when nations that had previously been at loggerheads realized that their real interest lay in using the BTWC to establish confidence and thus help to develop partnerships in the important field of life sciences. Similarly, both United Kingdom and European industry is fully behind an arms trade treaty, because it sees the advantages — for example, in security of access to investment — of being seen as a responsible player.

In a few weeks' time, the States parties to the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW) will meet to consider how to respond to real-world problems caused by the use of certain types of cluster munitions. The CCW is the only multilateral forum that brings together the major users and manufacturers of these weapons. While few would question the moral and humanitarian case for action — indeed, such concerns were the motivation for creating the CCW in the first place — those are not the only issues to be addressed. Force protection is an issue at the forefront of the concerns of those countries that have men and women engaged in crisis operations as we speak. So the CCW needs to consider the military utility of these weapons, and a weapon with a high failure rate is an ineffective one. We also need to build confidence that any arrangements will not simply create a cartel of high-tech manufacturers. So, in finding a solution to this real-world problem, we must have a clear understanding of the interests and concerns of others.

I have mentioned two examples from the weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons agendas to illustrate my point, but the United Kingdom believes that the same principles should apply across the arms control and disarmament agenda. Colleagues will be aware of the United Kingdom's enrichment bond initiative and of our work with others under the third pillar of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Equally, we look forward next year to joining the unique cross-

regional format of the six-member presidency of the Conference on Disarmament.

Finally, in diplomacy as in politics, there is a place for rhetoric and declaration. They are an important part of setting the tone and the framework for action. But let us not delude ourselves that they are in any way sufficient if we are to take up the challenges ahead. Those challenges are sufficiently grave to demand a new level of responsible engagement, a recognition of the collective interest and a willingness to reach out beyond old groupings. There are signs that the arms control and disarmament community has begun to recognize the important responsibilities placed upon us. The path ahead is a difficult one. But we will need to build on this spirit, to widen understanding of the twenty-first-century agenda and to encourage a willingness to work together.

Mr. Rapacki (Poland): In 2006, the six successive Presidents of the Conference on Disarmament — Poland, Republic of Korea, Romania, the Russian Federation, Senegal and Slovakia — initiated the mechanism of cooperation of all Presidents of Conference on Disarmament sessions. The mechanism is now commonly known as the P-6. Coordination and close cooperation allowed for continuity in the Conference Presidents' action. It also allowed for the consistency and coherency that has led to the comprehensive and balanced timetable of activities that covered all items on the Conference on Disarmament agenda.

Focused, structured debates — with participation by experts from capitals — were based on the P-6 timetable. They resulted in an in-depth examination of all items of the Conference agenda, including all so-called core issues.

We congratulate the 2007 Presidents, who successfully developed the 2006 scheme and made a serious attempt to allow the Conference on Disarmament to take a step forward. They brought the Conference to the point in the last nine years where we have been closest to reaching consensus on adoption of the programme of work.

The following trends are but a few examples of what has been happening in the Conference in the last two years. There has been an increase in the intensity of substantive debates as well as a large number of formal and informal documents presented by delegations, concrete proposals for new international

instruments, participation of experts from capitals and from other international organizations and better, more substantive reports of the Conference to the General Assembly.

The 2008 Conference Presidents have the heavy responsibility of building upon the momentum created in 2006 and 2007. Allow me to share with the Committee some of my views on possible further steps the Conference can make in the coming year.

In 2007, the Conference Presidents made serious efforts to bring the Conference on Disarmament closer to the adoption of the programme of work. It is my strong belief that, based on paragraph 57 of the 2007 report of the Conference on Disarmament, the outgoing and incoming Conference Presidents shall conduct intensive consultations in order to clarify the positions of Conference members regarding the proposal contained in document CD/2007/L.1. It would be useful if the Conference Presidents reported back to the Conference on the outcome of these consultations at the beginning of the 2008 session.

Even if the consultations on the L.1 document continue during the upcoming session, we should not forget the practice of the past two years. The Conference's rules of procedure clearly state in paragraph 19, "The work of the Conference shall be conducted in plenary meetings ...". Therefore, a lack of subsidiary bodies should not discourage us. On the contrary, it should strengthen the need for properly scheduled plenary meetings. The experience of the 2006 session proves that proper scheduling, together with proper balance between formal and informal plenary meetings, possibly with the participation of experts from capitals, as well as side events, provides the Conference with the possibility for conducting real substantive work.

While conducting the work of the Conference in a focused and well-scheduled manner, we should seek ways to open negotiations on issues most ripe for it.

Previous years have clearly shown that it is important to be comprehensive in examination of all agenda items. At the same time, previous years also proved that we have the most substance for opening proper negotiations in one area — fissile material. It is evident that this issue attracts the most attention and that we have at our disposal the largest amount of material to examine, namely, specific proposals for the shape, scope and content of the future treaty.

In our work, we should preserve a proper balance in examining all issues. But we should not — we even cannot — shy from dealing with issues that require such balance. Before we are able to adopt a consensual programme of work, our work must be based on proper scheduling of the plenary meetings, which will be a key to making further progress in the Conference on Disarmament.

When I was a Conference President, I compared the Conference on Disarmament to Sleeping Beauty awaiting her brave Prince, the programme of work. The past two years have proven that we can do better in the Conference on Disarmament than just wait for the programme of work. Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, the United States and Venezuela — the P-6 of 2008 — will have Poland's full support in their efforts to move the Conference on Disarmament forward.

The Chairperson (*spoke in French*): I call upon the Secretary of the Committee for an announcement.

Mr. Sareva (Secretary of the Committee): I wish to let members know that we have posted on the First Committee website — QuickFirst — the first oral statements, on draft resolutions A/C.1/62/L.4, A/C.1/62/L.15 and A/C.1/62/L.35. Hard copies can also be obtained, on the twenty-ninth floor of the Secretariat building.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.