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First Committee

25th meeting

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Official Records

Chair: Mr. Jinga (Romania)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda items 93 to 108 (continued)

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

The Chair (*spoke in French*): In keeping with the indicative timetable for this phase, contained in document A/C.1/73/CRP.2/Rev.1, we should conclude our thematic discussions today. We will continue the consideration of the cluster “Disarmament machinery” this afternoon. I again urge all speakers to kindly observe the established time limit.

Ms. Tichy-Fisslberger (Austria): Austria fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/73/PV.24).

We deeply regret that the Conference on Disarmament (CD) has not fulfilled its mandate as the disarmament negotiating forum for 22 years. While we value the efforts that were put into deliberations in the framework of subsidiary bodies in the Conference on Disarmament this year, in our opinion, that cannot replace compliance with the negotiating mandate.

We commend the coordinators and most CD presidencies for their hard work and leadership. However, we must not lose sight of the fact that the CD has remained in deadlock as regards the start of negotiations on key issues of international peace and security. Breaking that deadlock should remain the highest priority of CD members, particularly in the

context of the current unstable security environment. Political will is required to bring the CD back to work, in accordance with its mandate — that of disarmament negotiations. We continue to support revitalization efforts, and also reiterate our call for the expansion of CD membership.

We welcome that a new topic, “Outer space”, has been included on the agenda of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. We hope that the Commission can reach consensus on relevant recommendations during the next cycle. We support the ongoing efforts to improve the working methods of that body.

One key factor for the functioning of the United Nations machinery and the related instruments is their financing. All parties should honour their financial obligations and pay their contributions in full and on time.

We welcome the new Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) and look forward to cooperating with her and her team. UNIDIR is an autonomous Institute under the United Nations umbrella, with highly valuable contributions in the field of disarmament research. It is important that the Institute receive the necessary financial support in a manner that provides sustainability and allows for longer-term planning. The report (see A/73/256) presented during this session of the First Committee clearly articulates that the financial basis coming from the United Nations budget has to be increased. Statements of support for UNIDIR’s work will sound hollow as long as we do not engage in achieving that.

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UNIDIR's project on achieving gender equality in multilateral disarmament forums, in cooperation with the International Gender Champions, is one example of the pertinent questions that UNIDIR research addresses. We clearly need more focus on concrete strategies and practical guidance on how we can ensure that women are represented fully and equally in disarmament forums and that a gender perspective is incorporated into our disarmament work as a matter of principle.

As the Secretary-General emphasized in his disarmament agenda, the objectives of our disarmament work are growing more diverse. We agree with his assessment that we therefore need to strengthen partnerships for disarmament at all levels, with international organizations, civil society and the private sector, draw in new or marginalized constituencies and mobilize public interest at the global level.

Mr. Jadoon (Pakistan): The United Nations has a recognized disarmament machinery for dealing with arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament. The General Assembly established it by consensus in 1978 at its first special session devoted to disarmament (SSOD-I). The key principle set forth by SSOD-I in the context of that machinery is:

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

The fulfilment of that cardinal objective requires that any legally binding measure be considered and agreed strictly on the basis of consensus, with the participation of all stakeholders, allowing all States to safeguard their vital national security interests. Working on that basis, the Conference on Disarmament (CD), an integral part of the United Nations disarmament machinery, has produced significant landmark treaties, including those that have comprehensively prohibited two entire categories of weapons of mass destruction.

Since 1996, that disarmament machinery has not been able to produce a universally accepted legally binding instrument. That is squarely a consequence of the competing priorities of different Member States. Some States oppose the commencement of negotiations on new treaties simply because they clash with their strategic calculus aimed at perpetuating their military advantage and preferential positions.

Other States reject certain instruments that, because of their inherent discriminatory nature, would negatively affect those States' security disproportionately. At the same time, there are other States that want progress at any cost, regardless of the impact that it would have on international and regional peace and security and regardless of whether it would lead to equal and undiminished, if not increased, security for all.

The interplay of those factors has resulted in deadlock in the disarmament machinery. We share the disappointment and frustration felt by many over this state of affairs. However, we do not blame the machinery itself for the situation. Simply condemning the disarmament machinery or trying to find ways around it amounts only to addressing the symptoms without tackling the root causes. The situation is a result of the prevailing strategic realities. It has nothing to do with procedures and methods of work. After all, the same disarmament machinery has produced landmark treaties in the past.

The lack of progress on nuclear disarmament — the *raison d'être* of the CD — is the principal reason behind the criticism faced by the disarmament machinery. There is no consensus on the start of negotiations on any issue on the CD's agenda. Among the so-called four core issues, while the vast majority supports substantive work on the overripe issues of nuclear disarmament, negative security assurances and the prevention of an arms race in outer space, certain countries are only prepared to advance a partial non-proliferation measure in the form of a fissile material cut-off treaty that, without addressing existing stocks, will make no contribution to nuclear disarmament.

The challenges confronting the disarmament machinery are not exclusive to the CD. The First Committee and the Disarmament Commission (UNDC) face a similar situation, notwithstanding the breakthrough on the conventional-weapons-related agenda item at the UNDC last year, which we welcome as a demonstration of progress when requisite political will exists.

The solution to the impasse of the disarmament machinery cannot be found by seeking action outside established forums, especially when pursued on a non-consensus basis and without the participation of all stakeholders. Nor can it be found by reorienting a security-centric discourse into a humanitarian or ethical issue. It is only in the CD that all militarily

significant States participate on an equal footing and are able to protect their vital security interests under the consensus rule.

Instead of selective, piecemeal and partial solutions, Pakistan calls for evolving a new consensus. My delegation was pleased with the successful outcome of the Open-ended Working Group mandated to agree on the agenda and objectives of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-IV) last year. A successful SSOD-IV would be an important step towards the revival of the global consensus on general and complete disarmament, while taking into account the security concerns of all States, by eschewing discriminatory revisionism of the global nuclear order. We have to return to consensus-based, cooperative and non-discriminatory approaches that lead to equal and undiminished security for all.

Mr. Nugroho (Indonesia): Indonesia aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Association of South-East Asian Nations (see A/C.1/73/PV.24).

The best system for dealing with the questions of disarmament and non-proliferation, particularly in the volatile and fragmented present global security environment, is the United Nations disarmament machinery. Its pace may not be ideal at times, and it may require intensive deliberation and negotiation, especially among those that have very different approaches to international security, but all forums of the United Nations disarmament machinery, namely, the Conference on Disarmament (CD), the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) and the First Committee, provide countries a level playing field to present their ideas, test their traction and gain international acceptance for them. If certain approaches do not find traction and a large part of the international community thinks otherwise, it is not the fault of the disarmament machinery. Rather, it is because the merit of those concepts is not convincing for the majority. Indeed, that is how democracy works.

The major reason why the disarmament machinery has been unable to produce outcomes on a number of occasions is the lack of political will by the States possessing nuclear weapons to achieve a clear elimination of their nuclear arsenals. We must be clear. Revitalization of the United Nations disarmament machinery will not be meaningfully possible without the nuclear-weapon States undertaking their

given commitments on disarmament. Of course, all other States must act responsibly and also fulfil their commitments.

Indonesia calls upon all countries to work together, better display needed political will and cooperate to ensure concrete advancement on all issues before the disarmament machinery. In that context, we welcome the recent decision by the CD on the establishment and work of the subsidiary bodies. Indonesia has agreed to be the coordinator of Subsidiary Body 1 on the prevention of a nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament. Such steps may not come across as very significant, but they can contribute to the resumption of negotiations in the CD.

In keeping with Indonesia's track record of promoting mutually respectful dialogue, flexibility and common understanding to achieve concrete outcomes, we will do our best to build bridges among countries with different approaches. However, we reiterate the responsibility of all countries to engage positively. It is regrettable that the CD failed to reach consensus on the report of Subsidiary Body 4 on negative security assurances. As a country that voluntarily renounced the nuclear-weapons option, Indonesia stresses the necessity of negative security assurances.

We expect the CD to resume its work in 2019, at the earliest, and agree on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work. We also urge all Member States to achieve consensus at the UNDC in its working group on recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Let me end with the reminder that enhancing the effectiveness of the United Nations disarmament machinery is a collective responsibility. Based on the machinery's existing rules of procedure and methods of work, landmark treaties and guidelines have been realized. Let us once more bring to bear our respective political capital to achieve the needed and well-owned edifice, which enables peace and security for everyone.

Mr. Czepelak (Poland): Poland aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/73/PV.24).

Poland is very much attached to multilateralism and its goals. There is one thing that we can state with strong conviction — in the ever-changing international security environment, it is important to build on solid, institutional structures and on a sound international

legal regime. The United Nations system provides us with a solid legal and organizational framework, which also refers to the field of disarmament and non-proliferation.

Poland appreciates the substantive work of this year's session of the Conference on Disarmament (CD). The establishment of five subsidiary bodies and the adoption of four reports (CD/2138, CD/2139, CD/2140 and CD/2141) constitutes a significant, and the first such, achievement in 22 years. We commend the coordinators of those bodies, from Belarus, Brazil, Germany, Indonesia and the Netherlands. We hope that that contribution will lead us to even more successful work in the CD next year and will pave the way for new international legal instruments in the foreseeable future.

Poland thanks the Secretary-General for his agenda for disarmament, announced last May in Geneva. It was important that such an initiative came from the top of the United Nations system. Moreover, it seems quite natural that it can be applied differently by individual States.

The disarmament machinery is not a perpetuum mobile. It needs constant engagement and an inflow of ideas and good will from Member States, civil society and non-governmental organizations, as well as academia and individual activists and researchers. Further progress is our common goal and responsibility, which can be achieved as a sum of our common efforts. Disarmament is not an abstract notion; it is a complex, fragile and cumbersome process.

First of all, we need to agree at the international level that there is a conducive environment to start any disarmament operations. Otherwise, the results could be counterproductive and may even worsen the security situation. Let us state that, while we wholeheartedly support a multilateral approach, including in the field in disarmament, at the same time, we do believe that the potential of traditional, intensive, bilateral diplomacy always needs to be exhausted. To that end, the political engagement of all main actors and their leaders is absolutely crucial.

We can now state, without prejudging further developments, that one important regional process of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation has already been initiated. In that context, we can only appeal to other leaders to engage even more in diplomatic efforts, which could lead to easing tensions, opening avenues and ending long-lasting conflicts.

Since we enjoy the unprecedented effectiveness of new means of communication, those technical tools should also better serve our internal communication within the disarmament machinery and disarmament environment. We need even better coordination among the main centres of disarmament and non-proliferation in Geneva, New York and Vienna. Exchanging information and opinions from different meetings and consultations in real time would be a great asset. The First Committee should still play a central role in presenting our position, but also in seeking solutions and generating new ideas.

Mr. Vogelaar (Netherlands): In addition to the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/73/PV.24), we would like to make the following remarks in our national capacity.

This year, the Netherlands launched its integrated foreign and security strategy, which will guide the Netherlands' foreign and security policy for the 2018-2022 period. Disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation, as well as cybersecurity, are among our key priorities within the prevention pillar of that strategy. Multilateralism and international cooperation are of fundamental importance to us, since the international security environment directly affects our national security. Therefore, the Netherlands attaches great importance to the proper functioning of the disarmament machinery, as part of the wider United Nations system, to uphold and strengthen the rules-based international order.

We are of the view that only by stepping up its collective efforts can the international community mitigate the existing and emerging challenges to our common security. In that context, we are encouraged by some of the positive developments within the disarmament machinery this year, which should be an overture for future progress.

The substantive work conducted this year in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) and the adoption by consensus of four substantive reports (CD/2138, CD/2139, CD/2140 and CD/2141) for the first time in 22 years is a significant step on which the CD must build in future sessions. The interactive exchanges in the subsidiary bodies, with the inclusion of experts from academia and think-tanks, show that progress is possible by focusing our efforts on the substantive issues on the CD's agenda, rather than on procedural matters. While we are encouraged by the substantive discussions, it is

essential to harness this momentum and move the CD forward to fulfilling its mandate with the early start of negotiations on disarmament measures.

The Netherlands was honoured to coordinate the meetings of Subsidiary Body 2. Its report (CD/2139), agreed by consensus, together with the report (see A/73/159) of the High-level Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) Expert Preparatory Group, provide a solid basis for the CD to move towards negotiations of an FMCT. We call upon all delegations to show the utmost flexibility in order to commence negotiations on that important treaty at the earliest possible instance.

In a similar vein, we are encouraged by the growing attention surrounding the issue of gender in the disarmament machinery. Diversity in backgrounds and perspectives increases the capacity of delegations to come to innovative and creative solutions. The growing number of delegations striving for equal participation and the increasing attention on gender perspectives both encourage and justify our continued efforts on that issue.

As outlined in the Secretary-General's agenda for disarmament, some developments in the fields of science and technology pose risks to the maintenance of international peace and security and respect for international humanitarian and human rights law. The CD and other disarmament forums and treaty bodies should adopt a flexible approach in addressing those issues, including through the negotiation of disarmament measures other than legally binding instruments, such as codes of conduct, principles and guidelines.

While the Netherlands is convinced that the CD should make further progress by focusing on substance, it is also clear that we need to adapt the disarmament machinery to address contemporary and future challenges. The valuable participation of academia and think-tanks in the CD's subsidiary bodies have once again demonstrated the added value of civil society in disarmament forums. At the same time, the Netherlands supports the expansion of membership of the CD and further work on the improved and effective functioning of the CD. In our view, the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament would be a timely opportunity to review and update the disarmament machinery, where necessary.

Unfortunately, there is also reason for concern. The various treaty bodies inside and outside the United Nations depend on the timely and full payment

of Member States' contributions. The structural, late or non-payment of contributions are putting those treaty bodies at risk and undermining the prospect for progress of the disarmament machinery as a whole. The Netherlands stands ready to work with other delegations on sustainable solutions for the current financial issues to ensure the proper functioning of the disarmament machinery.

Ms. Wood (Australia): We are getting to the stage in this session of the First Committee where we are a little weary of statements. Most of us have delivered substantive messages under various clusters and the temptation is not to speak during this session. It is important that we do. The United Nations disarmament machinery is our framework for discussing, negotiating and agreeing critical international security issues. It is essential that it be fit for purpose and an effective toolbox to navigate an increasingly complex multipolar world. Dialogue that builds trust has never been more important.

We are encouraged by some developments in the disarmament machinery this year. The Conference on Disarmament (CD) was able to agree by consensus on reports from four subsidiary bodies (CD/2138, CD/2139, CD/2140 and CD/2141). That significant achievement is more than the CD has been able to do in years. We should build on this in 2019. It reflects intensive dialogue in five subsidiary bodies and a willingness by Member States to engage and deepen their understanding of each other's positions. The involvement of experts added value. We thank the subsidiary body coordinators, the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research for their support.

Similarly, the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC), which Australia had the honour to chair this year, enjoyed the quickest agenda adoption since 2006. It successfully launched working groups on nuclear risk reduction and outer space transparency and confidence-building measures and has a solid foundation for building towards an outcome in 2020. We are hopeful that the UNDC and CD can increase their coordination as a matter of practice.

Of concern, however, is the funding crisis in the Geneva-based arms-control conventions. To maintain and strengthen those conventions, we need to be able to hold effective meetings and have implementation support. The key problem is that some States do not pay

their contributions on time or at all. That situation is not sustainable or fair for those who do.

Some of the achievements mentioned above appear modest, but this undersells how difficult it is to build consensus. We welcome the Secretary-General's thinking on the disarmament machinery and partnerships in his agenda for disarmament.

We are convinced that one of the most impactful contributions we can make to the disarmament machinery is to build diversity. Our impetus to bring more women into the fold of international security is so much more than altruism. Diversity in a room of decision-makers leads to better decisions. We need to build the pipeline of young, dynamic, creative, innovative women and men who see themselves with a career in maintaining and strengthening international peace and security.

I would like to introduce Hayley Keen, who is sitting behind me. Hayley is an intern at the Australian Mission and helps with the First Committee. Many First Committee members may have met her when she asked them to co-sponsor draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.26 on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which we encourage members to do. However, more importantly, Hayley, like some others in the room, is at the start of her career and will soon be making choices about whether international security is a field where she feels that she can make a contribution that will be valued. As experienced delegates, we have a responsibility to mentor and encourage colleagues like Hayley. We need to grow our talent.

Visible role models are important. Several studies have found that women benefit from role models of their own gender much more than men do, particularly when those role models are associated with study or work. We live at a time when our youngest generation is growing up having seen strong women increasingly embedded in the global international security framework. That is a good thing, but we can and should do more to normalize the contribution of women to international security.

Mr. Chhetri (Nepal): Nepal aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.24).

I wish to begin by expressing Nepal's consistent commitment to complete and general disarmament. In that context, we believe that the international

disarmament machinery has an important role to play. Nuclear weapons today remain the biggest source of insecurity to the world community, irrespective of who owns them. Since weapons can never be useful deterrents, their total elimination is the only guarantee against their use or threat of use.

Nepal also believes that a legally binding instrument requiring nuclear-weapon States to provide negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States will be an important step towards achieving nuclear disarmament. Until weapons of mass destruction are eliminated, the ideals of international peace and security enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations are difficult to achieve.

We support effective multilateralism and the rules-based system for achieving complete and total disarmament and non-proliferation. We also welcome the recent developments in the Conference on Disarmament regarding the establishment of subsidiary bodies. The consensus adoption of recommendations on the objectives and agenda of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-IV) is an expression of the commitment of Member States to continue multilateral disarmament deliberations. We look forward to the early convening of SSOD-IV.

We are convinced that the existing disarmament machinery and disarmament organs are well-intentioned and capable of making progress in the disarmament regime if utilized more regularly and effectively. The political commitment of Member States, particularly that of Member States with nuclear weapons, is even more important in that regard.

The active engagement of all Member States can facilitate effective and sustainable outcomes in all areas of policy discussion. We therefore recommend that all nations, irrespective of their capabilities — nuclear or other — be taken on board in disarmament deliberations and negotiations. The least developed countries are not just silent observers; they also face the disproportionate and indiscriminate consequences of armaments and arms proliferation. Therefore, they should be given equal opportunity in international disarmament mechanisms.

The United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament could be of enormous significance for regional disarmament discussions and building confidence at the regional levels. That will ultimately

contribute to broader disarmament deliberations and negotiations. Therefore, as important contributors to the disarmament process, those Centres should be further strengthened, well-resourced and developed to their fullest strength.

In conclusion, we must work together with the utmost commitment within the existing United Nations disarmament machinery and bodies to realize the ideals of international peace and security in this highly interdependent world.

Mr. Herráiz (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/73/PV.24).

In a global environment marked by complex tension, Spain reiterates its support for effective multilateralism and the United Nations as the bases for cooperation and the rule of law, which can address challenges to international peace and security.

The machinery established during the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament in 1978 is essential, and it is necessary that we maintain consensus on the main aspects of the process leading up to the fourth special of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. The fuel keeping that machinery running smoothly is credibility, and credibility is achieved only on the basis of concrete and tangible steps.

The First Committee, to which we belong, constitutes a highly relevant forum, the impact of which could be bolstered with more debates that put greater focus on current security issues and challenges. We should not resign ourselves to simply updating resolutions; we must travel beyond well-trodden paths with initiatives that reconcile audacity and a full awareness of security conditions.

Moreover, the Conference on Disarmament (CD) must be more consistent in fulfilling its mandate and pursue greater amounts of creativity, flexibility and political will. We believe that the technical discussions carried out by the CD are necessary, but under no circumstances can we be satisfied, as the nature of that forum is not to deliberate, but rather to negotiate.

We also believe that the Conference on Disarmament cannot become victim to the lack of political will of its member States. We live in difficult times, in which it is vital to have spaces for dialogue, while avoiding attitudes that weaken institutions or

cause multilateralism to lose credibility. We commend the work of the subsidiary bodies of the Conference during this year's session, which will allow us to guide the course of future efforts.

Consensus, an essential rule for the functioning of the Conference on Disarmament, cannot amount to systematically resorting to use of the veto. Consensus forces us to actively and constructively search for inclusive formulas that foster agreement.

We believe the issue that will allow negotiations to move forward is a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. However, while waiting to negotiate legally binding instruments, more immediate alternatives could be considered, such as possible political declarations, guidelines or codes of conduct, in particular on risk reduction, confidence-building measures, transparency and verification.

Finally, the United Nations Disarmament Commission, as a deliberative body, also recorded a lengthy dry period regarding concrete recommendations. Its achievement over the past year on conventional weapons, nevertheless, shows that positive results can be obtained with the necessary patience and political will. We hope that this will be possible over the next two years, having incorporated outer space onto the agenda of the Commission as a relevant issue for debates.

We do not wish to miss the opportunity to insist on gender equality, which is also an ethical imperative and a pressing need in this area. We hope that increasingly more women will join the work of the disarmament machinery.

In conclusion, we emphasize the importance for all States to make their financial contributions within the established deadlines. Only then can the disarmament machinery remain a rigorous instrument at the service of the international community.

Mr. Belousov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation is convinced that the United Nations should play the leading role in addressing the issues of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as international peace and global security. The goal of strengthening existing regimes and developing new ones in the area of arms control should be addressed within either the framework of already existing conventional mechanisms or that of the United Nations disarmament machinery. That would

ensure that we abide by the principle of multilateralism in disarmament.

All three disarmament components — the First Committee, the United Nations Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament — must responsibly and effectively carry out their mandated tasks, for which we, as Member States, must ensure the necessary conditions. Those bodies must strictly follow their mandates and avoid politicization during their deliberations, as that would be to the detriment of resolving the current issues of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation.

Unfortunately, along with the existing issues of individual disarmament forums, we have recently witnessed the discussions of such forums become over-politicized, which distracts their participants from considering their agendas and generally reformats their work.

We experienced such action this year in the Conference on Disarmament. Due to the positions of individual States, it was not possible for us to get the most out of the work of the subsidiary bodies. It is not constructive to take a position that runs counter to the traditions and spirit of the Conference, and such behaviour impeded one member of the Conference on Disarmament from fully carrying out its functions as President. It is unacceptable for States to attempt to move away from the established practice of the Conference's work.

Furthermore, that forum also saw a distinctive trend towards considering issues, albeit important in terms of international security, outside the agenda of the forum and its mandate. In practice, that was reflected by the fact that, for the first time in 12 years, the Conference adopted a purely technical procedural report (CD/2149) this year.

We are also currently witnessing similar trends in the First Committee. Signs of politicization, which, in turn, leads to polarization and to difficulties in reaching consensus decisions, have been apparent in the New York-based platform. That trend is also in full swing at the current session, a prime example of which was the vote that took place last week (see A/C.1/73/PV.19) on the possibility of the First Committee considering Russia's draft resolution in support of the INF Treaty.

Of course, there are also positive aspects to the work of disarmament forums. For example, progress

has recently been made in the United Nations Disarmament Commission. Last year, for the first time since 1999, Member States managed to adopt consensus recommendations, "Recommendations on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons" (A/72/42, annex). This year, a new item was added to the agenda of the forum, thanks to a joint initiative of China, the United States and Russia, on preparing recommendations on trust and transparency measures in space, in order to prevent an arms race in outer space.

Another promising outcome was the substantive discussions of the five subsidiary bodies of the Conference on Disarmament, which were established this year. That enabled us all to try to identify points of convergence on the topics of the traditional agenda and to identify specific issues on which the Conference on Disarmament could focus in the future.

We intend to continue making further efforts in the future to improve the work of the three disarmament forums. In that regard, I would like to refer to the Russian proposal of March 2016 on starting to develop an international convention, within the Conference on Disarmament, to combat acts of chemical and biological terrorism.

In conclusion, I wish to say a few words on the Secretary-General's disarmament agenda, which he launched this year. On the whole, we welcome the document, and we actively participated in its deliberations. However, at the same time, we are compelled to note that it does not reflect our opinions, despite the fact that the publication of the agenda was preceded by a number of consultations among the Secretariat and individual States. We will closely monitor the implementation of that document, and we believe that Member States should determine the agenda in such a sensitive area as arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, my delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.24).

The Syrian Arab Republic believes in sincere and honest multilateralism in all fields, particularly in the area of disarmament. However, the existing disarmament machinery is undermined by the lack of political will of certain countries.

This year, my country, Syria, presided over the Conference on Disarmament (CD), guided in its work by the Conference Statute and demonstrating professionalism and transparency, as expected of the presidency. My country believes in the importance of the CD as the unique multilateral negotiating forum, through which nuclear disarmament and a world free of nuclear weapons can be achieved. During its presidency, my country focused on reaching a comprehensive and balanced programme of work that reflected the concerns of Member States, as per rule 29 of the rules of procedure, while holding intense consultations and adhering at the same time to the principles of professionalism, transparency and inclusiveness.

At a time when we most needed to work together productively and positively to end the stalemate that the Conference has faced for over 20 years, the United States and its allies used the Conference to force certain issues outside of its mandate. That approach of the western countries clearly undermines the work of the Conference. As everybody knows, those countries exercised double standards, with regard to the risks facing the global and regional security environment. I therefore pose the following question to everyone in this chamber: why is the United States refusing to accept the establishment of a working group to negotiate an agreement to suppress chemical and biological terrorism, as was proposed by the Russian Federation?

The countries that are undermining any serious and genuine work and negotiations thus obstructing the conduct of the Conference for political reasons in violation of the Conference rules of procedure are most of the Western countries, in particular the nuclear ones, namely, the United States, France and Britain. Those States seem completely unwilling to accept any progress in nuclear disarmament, the peaceful use of outer space or even the issue of Negative Security Assurances.

In violation of the accepted work and practices of the CD, the Conference secretariat uploaded on 11 October a note verbale CD/2147 to the Conference's website, which was submitted by France and on behalf of the United States and Britain. The document contains false accusations against my country, Syria. Ironically, that note verbale was never circulated among Member States, and my country, Syria, was not given the opportunity to clarify its position on it. Based on transparency and collective work, we therefore ask for this document to be withdrawn and deleted from the annual procedural reports of the CD.

The Syrian presidency of the Conference was the only one to submit a programme of work for this year, which was widely supported by Member States. However, the politicization by the United States and its allies prevented us from reaching consensus on the programme of work, for entirely unrelated pretexts. The United States and its allies therefore demonstrated once again that they are the main parties hindering the work of the Conference this year. The United States also hindered the adoption of the Conference's substantive annual report on its work this year, for well-known political motives. One has to ask: how can the United States, which hampered the adoption of a programme of work and a substantive report, credibly assume the presidency of the Conference next year?

Mr. Kazi (Bangladesh): Bangladesh aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Indonesia under this and the previous two thematic clusters (see A/C.1/73/PV.22 and A/C.1/73/PV.23).

Bangladesh remains an ardent proponent of multilateralism in the pursuit of general and complete disarmament. We continue to emphasize the need to reinvigorate the United Nations disarmament machinery, in order to add momentum to intergovernmental negotiations on outstanding disarmament and non-proliferation issues.

We share frustration and concerns about the continued failure of the Conference on Disarmament (CD), the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, to reach agreement on its programme of work. That should not be allowed to become the status quo. If history is any guide, the prevailing tension in the international security environment should create the impetus to breath a fresh lease of life into the CD's work.

In that context, we appreciate the progress made in the work of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, as the chief deliberative body on disarmament issues. We also draw inspiration from one decisive step taken towards the possibility of convening the much-anticipated fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

The Secretary-General's agenda for disarmament should generate motivation for reviewing and reinforcing the United Nations disarmament machinery, in light of current and emerging challenges.

Bangladesh supports a continuous review of the First Committee's working methods, so as to make its

proceedings better attuned to the evolving imperatives in the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda. There is perhaps a need for an objective assessment of the number and subjects of existing resolutions of the Committee, with a view to avoiding duplication and overlap. We take due note of Germany's decision to withdraw its draft resolution (A/C.1/73/L.35) on practical disarmament measures next year and encourage similar consideration by others.

The Secretary-General's report (A/73/177) on current developments in science and technology and their potential impact on international security and disarmament efforts offers a portfolio of issues with which the United Nations disarmament machinery, including the Committee, should progressively engage. It is critical that we rise above the mindsets and modus operandi of the previous century to keep the United Nations and its disarmament tools and mechanisms relevant and able to respond to the forthcoming challenges of our time and beyond.

This year, our delegation flagged its particular interest in further progress in developing a set of internationally agreed norms for regulating responsible behaviour in cyberspace. We have underscored the need for factoring in the voices and concerns of developing countries in the process. We can and would expect the proponents of multiple initiatives at the Committee this year to still make efforts to work together to face off a threat from which none of us is immune in our hyperconnected world. Bangladesh enlists its support for implementing the Secretary-General's related action points under his disarmament agenda.

Bangladesh recognizes the critical importance of regional disarmament and security initiatives. We thank the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific for its continued technical assistance for Member States in the Asia-Pacific region. In the advent of the twentieth anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security, Bangladesh would be interested in collaborating with the UNRCPD on enhancing the role and participation of women in disarmament and international security.

Bangladesh wishes to put on record its appreciation for the continued useful work being done by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research and stresses the need for ensuring enhanced and predictable resources for the Institute to deliver on its mandates. We

also recognize the useful learning resources developed by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs.

Ms. Hu Huifang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): In recent years, the international community has reflected on why the multilateral disarmament machinery remains in deadlock and on how to move forward. Should we maintain the existing machinery or overhaul it entirely?

Forty years ago, the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament established a multilateral disarmament machinery composed of the First Committee, the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) and the Conference on Disarmament (CD). In its early years, that disarmament machinery made important contributions to safeguarding world peace and security and promoting international arms control and the disarmament process.

Against the current grim and complex international security backdrop, the authority of the multilateral disarmament machinery should be strengthened rather than weakened. China believes that the joint efforts of all parties are needed to revitalize the multilateral disarmament machinery.

First, we should defend the authority of the multilateral disarmament machinery. The adoption of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, as well as other important arms-control treaties, fully demonstrates that the problems do not lie with the multilateral disarmament machinery and its rules of procedure. We should not negate the value and significance of the disarmament machinery just because we have encountered some short-term difficulties and setbacks. The role of the CD as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum is irreplaceable, and the role of other forums in the multilateral disarmament machinery, including the First Committee and the UNDC, is undeniable. Overhauling the machinery is by no means the correct way to solve problems.

Secondly, we should enhance the international community's political will concerning disarmament. It is generally believed that the fundamental cause of the stalemate plaguing the disarmament machinery is a lack of political will. Political will, as the precondition for diplomatic efforts, is not generated in a vacuum; rather, it is based on all parties' assessments of the international and their own security environments. Only by pursuing common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable

security and abandoning the notion of absolute security can we create a favourable international security environment that helps to enhance the political will of all parties to take part in multilateral arms-control and disarmament processes.

Lastly, we should set up new agendas, in accordance with international security developments. The multilateral disarmament machinery has to keep pace with the evolving situation of international arms-control and disarmament processes. Instead of dealing with old problems that have dragged on for many years, it is more urgent that we prevent the emergence of new problems. Preventative work is easier to start and will create a window of opportunity for the disarmament machinery to end its stalemate. The Chinese delegation has made suggestions to the CD on the review of new agenda items, including the rapid development of new and emerging technologies and the lack of rules and norms for frontier issues. All parties could express their views on those issues fully and thoroughly, so as to inject vigour into the multilateral disarmament machinery.

This year, Secretary-General Guterres delivered a speech at the CD (see CD/PV.1446) and later launched his disarmament agenda, making recommendations on the revitalization of the disarmament machinery. In-depth discussions on major issues in the disarmament field were also conducted in the five subsidiary bodies set up by the CD this year. The Chinese delegation appreciates the positive efforts made by all parties and hopes that the CD can soon start substantive work after concluding a comprehensive and balanced programme of work.

The UNDC achieved results on the issue of conventional weapons last year. The Chinese delegation hopes that all parties will participate in the discussion of nuclear and outer-space issues with an active and pragmatic attitude, so that the UNDC can achieve new progress. The Chinese delegation is ready to join hands with all parties and contribute to the maintenance and revitalization of the existing multilateral disarmament machinery within the United Nations framework.

Mr. Liddle (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/73/PV.24), and I would like to make some remarks in a national capacity.

The United Kingdom remains fully committed to the ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons,

in line with our obligations under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We strongly believe that the best way to achieve that goal is through gradual multilateral disarmament that is negotiated using a step-by-step approach and within existing frameworks. We remain committed to the current disarmament machinery, which is a central pillar of the rules-based international order and is at the heart of our multilateral approach to disarmament issues.

The strength of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) is that it affords a forum in which all States that possess nuclear weapons and other key players in the international system can have serious discussions on disarmament with respect to each other's national security interests, protected by the consensus rule. However, that rule should not be employed to block the adoption of a programme to get us back to work. We again call for the early resumption of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty.

The CD is the only place where effective disarmament measures that bind all relevant actors can be negotiated. Instruments agreed in the CD become cornerstones of the international system. If progress is slow, it is not down to the machinery, but the lack of political will among its member States.

The United Kingdom welcomes the progress made in this year's CD session, particularly with regard to the establishment of the five subsidiary bodies. Their substantive discussions and the reports (CD/2138, CD/2139, CD/2140 and CD/2141) adopted by consensus for four of the five, should be the basis for further work in 2019.

The United Kingdom looks forward to assuming the presidency of the CD in February. We invite all CD member States to send senior representation for the high-level segment in the week beginning on 25 February. We will work with all delegations and the five other Presidents of the 2019 session to see if a programme of work that is acceptable to all delegations can be adopted.

We welcome the aspiration of the Secretary-General, set out in his own disarmament agenda, to do more to save lives, build partnerships and prevent conflict, although there are some elements with which we disagree. We are carefully reviewing the actions in the United Nations implementation plan. The United Kingdom firmly supports the current arms-control machinery and the existing regimes and believes that

any actions emanating from the disarmament agenda should enhance implementation and bolster compliance with the existing mechanisms.

Those mechanisms must be fully and sustainably funded if they are to play the role that we all need them to play. We are encouraged by efforts to find solutions to the structural problems that exist in some conventions and treaties, but they will only work if all States parties pay their contributions on time and in full and settle the arrears that have built up.

We hope that a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament would focus on how the international community can come together to work on issues that benefit all of our mutual security and review elements of the disarmament machinery to ensure that they work smoothly together.

To conclude, I would like to recognize the valuable work carried out by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, as a stand-alone autonomous institution. Its independent research on disarmament and security plays an important role in informing the work of the CD and other parts of the disarmament machinery, as well as the wider debate on those issues. We look forward to participating in further work on how to improve its funding structure and operating model.

We look forward to working with all delegations on those vital issues across the United Nations disarmament machinery over the coming year.

Mr. Klučar (Czech Republic): The Czech Republic has always been a supporter of the United Nations and effective multilateralism. In order to achieve goals and meet challenges in the field of international security, especially in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, we need a well-functioning and fully operational United Nations disarmament machinery, the role of which is, in our view, irreplaceable.

Unfortunately, one of the key components that plays a significant role in the machinery, the Conference on Disarmament (CD), has not been able to meet our expectations for more than two decades. We are frustrated by the continuing deadlock in that body and its repeated failure to commence substantial disarmament negotiations.

Like the vast majority of Member States, we have been expecting the commencement and early conclusion of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a legally binding treaty banning the production of fissile

material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. We regret that it has not been able to deliver any tangible result to those ends so far.

We also hope that sufficient time and effort will be devoted to the question of the enlargement of the Conference. That hope is in line with the rules of procedure of the CD, which provide for the review of the membership question at regular intervals. We therefore reiterate our call for the appointment of a special coordinator who could initiate the necessary debate on the topic of enlargement of the CD. We are convinced that the enlargement of CD membership would promote transparency and inclusiveness in its work. We believe that enlargement is essential not only to the CD but also to the international community as a whole. This step could help the CD to regain its credibility and dispel any doubts about its relevance.

Nevertheless, the Czech Republic is also encouraged by recent signs of progress in certain parts of the United Nations disarmament machinery. Specifically, we welcome the successful adoption by the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) last year of recommendations on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons (A/72/42, annex) after 18 years of stalemate in the UNDC, which should be viewed as a clear and encouraging sign. The Czech Republic hopes that the adoption of the UNDC recommendations will provide much-needed momentum that will have a positive spillover effect throughout the entire United Nations disarmament machinery.

Finally, the Czech Republic remains a steadfast supporter of the crucial work of the First Committee. With its universal membership and emphasis on decision-making by consensus, the First Committee remains at the very centre of our joint multilateral disarmament efforts. We are troubled by the recent efforts of some States to cast aside consensus as the principle mode of decision-making, while giving preference to voting on procedural matters. We call on all States to uphold the principle of consensus and conduct negotiations in the spirit of mutual compromise and understanding.

Ms. Myung Eunji (Republic of Korea) (*spoke in French*): I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate the strong commitment of the Republic of Korea towards multilateral disarmament efforts, in order to make the world a safer and more secure place. This year, we have witnessed efforts to strengthen two

important disarmament machineries — the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) and the Conference on Disarmament (CD).

(spoke in English)

Regarding the United Nations Disarmament Commission, the Republic of Korea welcomes the successful conclusion of the substantive session held this April for the 2018-2020 UNDC. It was even more meaningful in the sense that the question of transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities was first discussed as a new agenda item for Working Group II, with the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space. However, much more needs to be done, as this year's UNDC failed to reach a consensus in adopting the recommendations of the Working Group.

In our deliberations on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, the Republic of Korea would like to emphasize that our timeline should be set for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), marking the fiftieth anniversary of the cornerstone Treaty. My Government hopes that the positive momentum created by the UNDC continues in multilateral disarmament discussions, including at the 2020 NPT Review Conference.

As for the Conference on Disarmament, the Republic of Korea attaches great importance to the CD as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. My Government disagrees with the view of some people who criticize the CD, saying it has lost its relevance, due to a prolonged period of stalemate.

Last year, we saw signs of progress through the works of the Working Group on the Way Ahead, although the Working Group failed to reach a consensus in adopting recommendations. During this year's session, our efforts to maintain the relevance of the Conference have been taken a step further through the discussions of five subsidiary bodies, established in accordance with decision CD/2119. Accordingly, CD member States have actively engaged in structured and substantive discussions in order to reach common understanding on the core CD agenda items. It is a common responsibility for CD members to build on those efforts and find a way to initiate negotiations. In that regard, the Republic of Korea sincerely hopes that the CD will see more concrete progress next year.

On a separate note, I would like to quickly mention that Geneva-based disarmament conventions continue to be in financial trouble. The meeting of States parties of the first multilateral disarmament treaty for an entire category of weapon, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, which is planned to take place in December, is at risk. We urgently need to make additional efforts to secure a sound financial system for a more efficient disarmament machinery.

Ms. Pintola (Thailand): Thailand aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Namibia, on gender and the disarmament machinery, of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and of Myanmar, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (see A/C.1/73/PV.24).

Thailand views an effective disarmament machinery as one that leads the international community towards our common disarmament and non-proliferation goals and whose work is well integrated within the larger objectives of the United Nations.

It is important for our disarmament machinery to be able to keep up with important developments and adapt itself, for instance to the changing international security landscape. Only then will it remain relevant and have a chance to be as effective as it was envisioned to be. The United Nations itself is currently undergoing major reform initiatives, namely, management reform, restructuring of the peace and security pillar and repositioning of the United Nations development system. Security Council reform discussions have also pressed on despite the obvious challenges in tackling the status quo.

Perhaps it is time for us to look collectively at whether our disarmament machinery should be reviewed. But to do so, we have to understand and recognize the important developments taking place around us.

For one, disarmament and non-proliferation discussions can no longer be limited to States. The disarmament machinery must be inclusive, with different voices that represent the population. The role of civil society, academia and youth in disarmament work has been noteworthy and, at times, revolutionary in moving forward work. It is in that context that we also look forward to hearing more women's voices.

Secondly, the recent launch of the Secretary-General's disarmament agenda was an important step. The agenda formally recognizes the stakes of multiple players in disarmament and the linkage of our disarmament efforts to other goals of the United Nations, including the Sustainable Development Goals. Therefore, the existing disarmament machinery should incorporate and properly reflect the Secretary-General's new disarmament agenda, in order to translate the Secretary-General's visions into concrete actions in an inclusive and non-discriminatory manner. The Secretary-General's preventive agenda should also formally fit into a comprehensive disarmament machinery, which could be an effective response to both looming conflicts and armaments.

Thailand is of the firm belief that a rules-based international system is the most effective way to manage multiple security challenges. The disarmament machinery, supported by the United Nations Secretariat, must uphold multilateralism and fulfil its roles, which, for Thailand, are threefold: it must promote progress in disarmament, while being a source of confidence for States, and support trust-building among States.

The First Committee continues to be the most multilateral, representative and effective platform for discussions. While we continue to strive for consensus in our decision-making, it is important to note that universality and consensus can also be achieved gradually *ex ante* in a majoritarian process. There is indeed a role for alternatives to the consensus-based approach. Consensus-building must not be misused for the gains of a State, at the expense of the common interest and security of all.

In that regard, Thailand welcomes the progress within the Conference on Disarmament (CD). The CD should principally serve the collective security of all and not only a select few. Therefore, membership must be more inclusive and democratic. Consultations on the expansion of its membership and ways to engage multi-stakeholders, such as civil society, must be considered.

Thailand also welcomes the recent discussions in the United Nations Disarmament Commission and encourages all Member States to reflect on the outcome of the Open-ended Working Group on convening the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-IV) and to continue discussions on convening SSOD-IV without further delay.

Finally, the United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament are also vital in promoting multilateral disarmament issues, bridging needs and fostering cooperation in the region. Think-tanks and institutions, such as the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, which continuously advance research in support of our efforts, must also be supported.

Thailand is strongwilled in its support for driving our machinery forward towards our common goal. Let us see what more we can do.

Mr. Penaranda (Philippines): The Philippines associates itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Myanmar, on behalf of the Association of South-East Asian Nations, and of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.24). My delegation also aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Namibia on behalf of a cross-regional group of 53 Member States (see A/C.1/73/PV.24) on the importance of applying a gender perspective to the disarmament machinery. I am delivering this statement on behalf of my country to expound on gender balance in approaching disarmament and arms control.

The recognition of women's representation at all levels of society and in international organizations that promotes gender equality and the empowerment of women has been noted and, in fact, has paved the way to a better understanding about women's important role in promoting international peace and security.

The Philippines, as a known gender champion, strongly supports calls for increased gender balance in the disarmament process, within the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and arms control and would like to see enhanced efforts in that regard.

The Philippines has created a national action plan on women, peace and security for the period 2017-2022, which provides ways and measures to uphold gender inclusion in consultative meetings and planning activities. The plan serves as the Philippine response to various international instruments on women, peace and security and supports the implementation of national mandates on women and gender equality, as well as peace and development.

The plan's tenth action point on preventive mechanisms and early-warning systems for women and girls to avert conflict-related violence is

strengthened through initiatives such as the continuous implementation of the comprehensive local integration programme to address the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. In the implementation of that programme, the Philippines is ensuring that the process is gender-balanced, with the participation of women and men. Other initiatives include an advocacy campaign to encourage licensing of firearms and the development of a programme package for women in disarmament.

Both at the grassroots and policy-making levels, women are involved in the Mindanao peace process, which includes the disarmament of belligerent groups. The Philippine National Reform and Reorganization Act prioritizes women for recruitment and promotes the role of women in law enforcement, peacebuilding and peacekeeping and public safety.

The Philippines recommends that Member States be further encouraged to develop appropriate and effective programmes or mechanisms that will protect women who have participated in the implementation of disarmament-related matters at the local, national, subregional and regional levels. Local Government officials are also encouraged to be involved in that endeavour. Harnessing the media may also be enhanced to solicit support from the general public and promote the pivotal role of women in capacity-building and their effort to investigate and prosecute firearms trafficking.

The contribution of women is vital across the peace process, including in disarmament and arms control. As we move forward with our commitment to promote the role of women, let us heighten support for their meaningful participation in all decision-making processes. Let us take stock and harvest lessons from successful initiatives, such as those in the Philippines, which reframe the intersection of gender and disarmament from one of oppression to that of agents of change, wherein women's meaningful participation becomes vital in taking the giant step to peace.

Mr. Ghaniei (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation associates itself with statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM) (see A/C.1/73/PV.24).

Multilateralism is the core principle of negotiations in the field of disarmament. There is no alternative to multilateralism. That is why, despite the lack of genuine political will on the part of certain nuclear-weapon States, which has rendered the United Nations

disarmament machinery inactive for years, it continues to remain relevant and valid.

Those nuclear-weapon States and their advocates that are unwilling to agree on a balanced, comprehensive and priority-based programme of work, have long tried to mask their lack of political will with technicalities. The Conference on Disarmament (CD) and the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) have formulated landmark universal instruments in the past, proving the relevance of their mandate and the efficiency and effectiveness of their rules of procedure, in particular the rule of consensus. That alone attests to the fact that the inactivity of the disarmament machinery has a political nature, rather than a procedural reason. The machinery, its structure and rules of procedure are totally innocent. Therefore, calling it ineffective is nothing but shifting blame. Indeed, in the absence of genuine political will, even the best possible disarmament machinery would certainly be totally ineffective.

We recall the adoption of recommendations on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons (A/72/42, annex) by the UNDC, as a result of the flexible position of NAM. We hope that, during the current UNDC cycle, certain nuclear-weapon States will demonstrate the same level of flexibility. That could enable the adoption of recommendations for achieving the objectives of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Recalling the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, we strongly support the early commencement of negotiations in the CD on a comprehensive nuclear-weapons convention, as called for by the General Assembly for years. That is the only practical option for leading nuclear disarmament in the right direction, which remains the highest priority of the overwhelming majority of States.

In recent years, we have witnessed a new phenomenon related to certain international organizations, such as the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, which have a statutory mandate and role to verify the obligations of States under certain non-proliferation and disarmament instruments. The act of the United States in publishing an annual report on adherence to and compliance with arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament agreements and commitments seriously undermines the authority and role of such organizations.

Along with its doctrine to withdraw from international instruments and institutions, the United States is also trying to weaken those multilateral institutions, which are the sole competent international bodies to carry out such mandates. Those reports, with their distorted and fabricated information and politically motivated analysis and assessment, have no value.

This year, we also witnessed similar politically motivated attempts by the United States and its allies with respect to the work and presidency of the CD. While there is no condition other than rotation for its presidency in the CD's rules of procedure, such measures did nothing but divert attention from the CD's work, which has been obstructed by those countries for over two decades.

My delegation supports the NAM position on the need for a strict application of the principle of equitable geographical distribution in the composition of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, as well as in the groups of governmental experts in the field of disarmament and international security. Likewise, my delegation supports the NAM proposal for the establishment of a United Nations fellowship programme on small arms and light weapons.

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

In conclusion, Iran stands ready to constructively cooperate, within the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery, with all interested States to achieve our common interests, the most important and urgent of which is the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Takamizawa (Japan): Japan strongly recognizes the important role of the United Nations disarmament machinery.

In recent years, the discussions of the First Committee and the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) have been vibrant, as illustrated through the creation of several groups of governmental experts, as well as the recommendations in the field of conventional disarmament of the UNDC. Japan considers those as positive developments. In particular, Japan attaches importance to the final report (see

A/73/159) of the High-level Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty Expert Preparatory Group, completed this year. We applaud that effort and achievement and hope that it has a positive impact on other disarmament forums.

The Conference on Disarmament (CD) remains essential, as it is the single multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament. We must use that forum to effectively address core agenda items and the challenges posed by technological advancement, from the influence of artificial intelligence on weapons systems to new threats in the realms of cyberspace and outer space. In that context, Japan welcomed the substantive and intensive discussions held this year under the five CD subsidiary bodies, covering a wide range of issues.

Although there are still clear gaps on some aspects, such as an understanding of the issues and ways in which discussions should advance, we are continuing our efforts to further explore possible commonalities with flexibility and creativity. We expect Ukraine, the first presidency of the CD in its 2019 session, to make an early start by further strengthening coordination among the six Presidents of the CD and convening informal consultation with all relevant stakeholders. Japan is determined to promote and contribute to such endeavours so that the CD can move forward and fulfil its own mandate.

It is always important to bear in mind that we can only start from where we are now. Given the current geopolitical and severe security situation, the international community is facing increasing tension, which, at times, has made it difficult for States with divergent views to engage in dialogue. Therefore, the need for constructive and respectful dialogue by all stakeholders must be emphasized now more than ever.

In that context, Japan believes that the agenda for disarmament presented by the Secretary-General provides us with many useful perspectives and cues for promoting disarmament, including a re-emphasis on effective partnership for the issues of gender consideration, empowering women and youth and cooperation with civil society.

In addition, it is evident that emerging issues and new challenges will affect not only various cross-cutting fields and stakeholders, but also all humankind, which is precisely why there is a pressing need to collectively act in multilateral forums. Japan supports this initiative and stands ready to cooperate with the United Nations and other Member States to make strides towards

strengthening the work and integration of the existing disarmament machinery.

Furthermore, we welcome the work done by the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters on the Secretary-General's agenda, released in May, and support the role of the Board being further strengthened.

Last, but certainly not least, Japan appreciates the significant contributions of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) in Geneva, New York and other parts of the world in various disarmament discussions and activities, including eight or more side events in the margins of the First Committee, whether on conventional weapons, weapons of mass destruction or cybersecurity, which is a very wide range of issues. Japan is keen to continue to see further collaboration with UNIDIR in five areas: credibility, relevance, independence, reach and the further convening of disarmament forums, taking advantage of their invaluable expertise.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of Turkey to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.40.

Ms. Çalışkan (Turkey): Given the current challenges that international security is facing, enhancing the effectiveness of the United Nations Disarmament Machinery needs to be our common priority. We would like to reiterate our support for the three complementary forums of the disarmament machinery, namely, the First Committee, the Conference on Disarmament (CD) and the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC).

The First Committee remains a significant component of the machinery and a valuable forum for considering disarmament and non-proliferation issues. While valuing the practice of introducing resolutions, we believe that the international community needs to be mindful of the absolute added value of some of those resolutions and the need to avoid unnecessary duplications.

The Conference on Disarmament, as the single multilateral platform for disarmament, has been at the centre of efforts towards ensuring international security since its inception. It has a unique place and a special responsibility in international forums, as it is tasked with negotiating multilateral disarmament instruments.

Questions have been raised regarding the ability of the CD to perform its negotiating mandate. We need to

bear in mind that the problems that hamper progress in the CD are not created by its procedures or internal dynamics. It does not operate in a vacuum, and we need to refrain from assessing the CD's work separately from other disarmament efforts. Turkey is convinced that the CD possesses the mandate, rules of procedure and membership to discharge its duties.

This year, while consensus on the programme of work did not emerge, encouraging and significant developments took place. Four subsidiary bodies were established on agenda items 1 to 4, and one subsidiary body was established on agenda items 5, 6 and 7. Those bodies were given the responsibilities of reaching an understanding on the areas of commonalities in the CD by taking into consideration all relevant past, present and future views and proposals, deepening technical discussions and broadening areas of agreement, including through the participation of relevant experts, and considering effective measures, including legal instruments for negotiations. We would like to once again thank the coordinators of the subsidiary bodies for their hard work. The adoption of four substantive reports (CD/2138, CD/2139, CD/2140 and CD/2140) was a significant step forward. The Conference will resume its work in 2019, and we believe that, next year, the most essential issue will be to maintain the relevance of the CD.

Turkey had the honour of being the last President of the Conference on Disarmament this year. In accordance with the importance that we attach to the work of the CD, we conducted negotiations in a responsible and transparent manner, with a view to reaching consensus on both the report of the CD (CD/2149) and the resolution on the report. The annual draft resolution on the report of the CD (A/C.1/73/L.40) was submitted to the Committee, and we count on the support of Member States when it is considered in the following days.

Another important pillar of the disarmament machinery is the United Nations Disarmament Commission. We support efforts to increase the effectiveness of the Disarmament Commission and welcome the inclusion of outer space as an agenda item. We commend the efforts by the Chair of the UNDC, Ambassador Bird of Australia, as well as the Chairs of the working groups. We hope that the deliberations will be instrumental in reaching consensus on the relevant recommendations, following the example of the breakthrough achieved in 2017.

Before I conclude, I would like to reiterate Turkey's determination to continue to constructively contribute to the work of all the components of the disarmament machinery.

Mr. Sanchez Kiesslich (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mexico has offered its unhindered support to the multilateral forums that were created to achieve nuclear disarmament, which Mexico has afforded a high priority since the very creation of the United Nations.

However, the Conference on Disarmament (CD) has not fulfilled its mandate for 22 years, having continued negotiations since 1996. No multilateral instrument has even agreed on a programme of work with a mandate for starting such negotiations. Moreover, working methods are contributing to the paralysis of that forum and a pretence of working is on the rise, with working groups and subsidiary bodies being established that have not delivered on the mandate of the CD.

My delegation believes that the use of resources for working groups or subsidiary bodies that produce limited results without any follow-up should prompt us to reflect on alternative uses for financial and human resources, which could be used for supporting and advancing the Sustainable Development Goals. While for the sake of consensus Mexico did not oppose the establishment of such mechanisms, it does not consider it appropriate to sustain a single existing mechanism to illustrate the work carried out in various working sessions. Seeing that there are still members who refuse to conduct formal discussions, there must at least be records of such meetings.

Although we recognize that the United Nations Disarmament Commission achieved the adoption of its working group's recommendations on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons in the area of nuclear disarmament during its session of 2017, its outlook is similar to that of the CD. Similarly, it has not been able to issue substantive recommendations following deliberations for more than a decade.

Within the framework of the First Committee, we note that many of the draft resolutions presented are repetitive and lack the fundamental changes that could give reason to advance in the area of disarmament. In many cases, consensus is prioritized over substance. The first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-I), held in 1978, is the only forum to have adopted a final document (resolution

S-10/2) that contains a declaration and a programme of action establishing goals, principles and priorities in disarmament matters and emphasizing the key role and primary responsibility of the United Nations with regard to the issue, while positioning those issues as priorities for the Organization. In that regard, Mexico wishes to move closer to convening a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, with the belief that that can overcome the impasse.

Revitalization or true reform of the entire disarmament machinery will be possible only when there is general understanding and recognition of its state of affairs. Mexico does not believe that its paralysis and deadlock should be accepted as the status quo or as a convenient situation. The disarmament machinery was built within a particular historical and political context. However, it must adapt to new realities and, in doing so, determine if its components and processes require additional changes.

Mexico has put forward different proposals for the Conference on Disarmament, the Disarmament Commission and the First Committee. We will continue to be proactive so that our proposals are taken into account, and we urge other members to seriously reflect on future steps and political decisions that we must take to revitalize the disarmament machinery. My country perceives the disarmament machine as a vehicle for taking the international community towards a goal, namely, international peace and security, including general disarmament.

I will conclude by quoting the final document of SSOD-I. It has been 40 years since it was convened, but it remains more relevant than ever before.

“Since the process of disarmament affects the vital security interests of all States, they must all be actively concerned with and contribute to the measures of disarmament and arms limitation, which have an essential part to play in maintaining and strengthening international security. Therefore the role and responsibility of the United Nations in the sphere of disarmament [...] must be strengthened” (*resolution S-10/2, para. 14*).

The Chair (*spoke in French*): We have heard the last speaker on the cluster “Disarmament machinery”, which brings an end to the Committee's thematic discussions for this session.

The next meeting of the Committee will take place tomorrow afternoon at 3 p.m. sharp in this Conference Room. In accordance with our programme of work, the Committee is scheduled to begin the third and final phase of its work tomorrow, namely, action on all draft resolutions and decisions.

In that regard, the Committee will be guided by the informal papers issued by the Secretariat containing the draft resolutions and decisions on which action will be taken each day. Informal paper No. 1 was circulated

online with a revision expected this evening. We will take action on the drafts under each cluster listed therein. The Secretariat will revise the informal paper on a daily basis, in order to update the drafts that are ready for action at each of the remaining meetings. In keeping with past practice, at the start of our meeting tomorrow afternoon, I will explain the procedure that will guide our work during the action stage.

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.