

# CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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## FINAL RECORD OF THE ONE THOUSAND AND THIRTY-FIRST PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,  
on Thursday, 3 August 2006, at 10.25 a.m.

President: Mr. Ousmane CAMARA (Senegal)

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I declare open the 1031st plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament and the third part of its 2006 session.

Today the Conference will start a structured debate focused on agenda item 4, entitled “Effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons”. I take this opportunity to provide an outline of the consideration of this item by the Conference. It is worth recalling that the issue of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons was included on the agenda of the Committee on Disarmament in 1979, that is, from the very first year of the activity of that negotiating body, which in 1984 became the Conference on Disarmament. In July of that year, an ad hoc working group was established to consider and negotiate on effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

From that time on, the Ad Hoc Working Group was re-established every year and presented its report to the Committee on Disarmament. In 1984, when the Committee on Disarmament became the Conference on Disarmament, the Ad Hoc Working Group itself became the Ad Hoc Committee, which was also re-established each year until 1994, when it was impossible for the Conference to reach agreement on the re-establishment of this and two other ad hoc committees, namely the Ad Hoc Committee on Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space and the Ad Hoc Committee on Transparency in Armaments. Consequently the work of these subsidiary bodies was suspended.

In 1998 the Ad Hoc Committee resumed its work and presented its report to the Conference on Disarmament. Although the report contained the recommendation, endorsed by the Conference itself, for the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee the following year, it has never met again. In these circumstances, the issue of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, or what have come to be called “negative security assurances”, has been addressed in plenary meetings.

You will recall that in 2004 the Conference reached agreement to hold a series of informal plenary meetings on all the agenda items with a view to facilitating efforts to reach agreement on a programme of work. The informal meeting on the issue of negative security assurances was held on 3 June 2004. A further step forward was made in 2005 when, during the term of office of the Ambassador of Norway, Mr. Strømme, the Conference held a number of plenary meetings during which delegations were invited to make statements on four subjects on the Conference’s agenda and, as customary, on any other issues relevant to the international security situation. Matters related to negative security assurances were addressed at the 989th plenary meeting, on 7 July 2005.

With today’s plenary meeting we are beginning a series of plenary meetings, both formal and informal, during which we will revisit the issue in a more systematic way. In particular, I encourage delegations to address at this meeting the nature and scope of the

(The President)

agenda item before us. The following speakers are on the list of speakers for today: the representatives of the Russian Federation, Morocco, Pakistan, Egypt, Nigeria, Morocco, Kenya, the Russian Federation, India, China, Malaysia, Algeria, Senegal, Belarus, Finland, Italy, Germany, Republic of Korea, Switzerland, Myanmar and Canada. Before giving the floor to the first speaker on the list, however, I would like to do two things: first of all give the floor to the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, and then say farewell on your behalf to a colleague who is going to leave us. Mr. Secretary-General, I give you the floor.

Mr. ORDZHONIKIDZE (Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations): First of all I would like to express our apologies for the technical delay, but as you know, we are in the process of improving our sound system all over the Palais, and this is the situation where when we want to make it better, it turns out as usual. That is somehow characteristic of United Nations actions.

On 21 June 2006, the Secretary-General of the United Nations addressed this august body, underscoring the role of the Conference in a period when multilateral disarmament machinery is stalling. In this regard, he referred inter alia to the failure of the World Summit to include any reference to the issues of non-proliferation and disarmament, as well as to the dismal results of the Review Conference on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. To these disappointing conclusions, we can now add the failure to agree on the outcome document of the United Nations Conference to review the implementation of the Programme of Action on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

The Secretary-General remains very committed to and concerned about the issues of disarmament and non-proliferation, and has followed up on his message of 21 June. To underscore this concern and commitment, he has sent me a letter from which I should like to quote a passage: "I was pleased to have the opportunity to address the Conference on Disarmament. At this critical time I hope that the member States will make good use of the Conference to build momentum and overcome the obstacles that have prevented progress for so long."

Personally, I think that the policy of continuity and coherence forged by successive Presidents offers us this year a rare opportunity to overcome the differences that have been plaguing us for such a long time. I sincerely hope that this unique body can live up to expectations and before long address the challenges that the international community faces in the sphere of disarmament and non-proliferation, especially during this difficult period of time in world history.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament for his statement, but also for the technical explanations he gave us. Now, on behalf of the Conference on Disarmament and on my own behalf, I would like to bid farewell to our distinguished colleague Ambassador Amina Mohamed, who will soon complete her duties as the representative of her country, Kenya, in the Conference on Disarmament.

(The President)

Ever since Ambassador Mohamed joined the Conference on Disarmament in November 2000, she has always articulated and upheld her country's position with distinctive authority and calm elegance. She has also contributed considerably to our deliberations with her knowledge of both procedural and substantive issues before the Conference. In particular she will be remembered for her crucial role in forging consensus on the resolution of the outstanding issues on the Conference's agenda and the commencement of substantive work. By putting forward imaginative proposals while she was in the Chair of the Conference at the beginning of the 2004 session, she skilfully led this body to the adoption of an unprecedented decision on enhancement of the engagement of civil society in its work.

Ambassador Mohamed also prepared the ground for the intensification of the Conference's work, which later that year made it possible to hold a series of informal plenary meetings aimed at reaching agreement on the programme of work. Ambassador Mohamed also provided invaluable support to the preparations for the first conference to review the Convention on Anti-Personnel Landmines, which took place in her country in 2004. The close and extremely professional interaction between herself, the President of the Review Conference, the Implementation Support Unit of GICHD and the secretariat itself undoubtedly contributed to the resounding success of the Nairobi summit. On behalf of the Conference on Disarmament and on my own behalf, I should like to convey to Ambassador Amina Mohamed and her family all our wishes for success and happiness.

Now I would like to give the floor to the first speaker on the list, the Ambassador of the Russian Federation, Mr. Valery Loshchinin.

Mr. LOSHCHININ (Russian Federation) (translated from Russian): I should like to give you some brief information on the results of the St. Petersburg summit of the Group of 8 on disarmament problems. The summit concluded two weeks ago. This forum traditionally attaches considerable importance to issues related to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. This year's summit, under the Chairmanship of Russia, was no exception, striving to ensure continuity in the work which was initiated in preceding years. The main focus was on support for multilateral efforts, with the United Nations playing a central role, designed to strengthen the existing regime for the non-proliferation of WMD and missile delivery systems. Of course, there was as usual discussion of problems directly related to the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament.

I would like to quote part of the statement by the G-8: "We" - that is, the participants in the summit - "re dedicate ourselves to the reinvigoration of relevant international [forums], beginning with the Conference on Disarmament. These efforts will contribute to the further reinforcement of the global non-proliferation regime".

The complex of political issues discussed at the summit formed a contribution to the collective search for agreed ways and means of strengthening international stability and security. Unanimous support was expressed for the initiative announced on the eve of the summit by the

(Mr. Loshchinin, Russian Federation)

Presidents of Russia and the United States of America in the form of a joint statement on a Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism. This initiative is a distinctive plan of action to organize practical cooperation among States to implement the convention to combat acts of nuclear terrorism adopted in 2005, as well as to implement United Nations Security Council resolution 1540. Russia and the United States called on all States to take the necessary measures to ensure certainty of punishment for terrorists, to improve accounting, control and protection of nuclear materials and sites and to ensure cooperation in the development of technical means to combat nuclear terrorism. The main task is to ensure that all States fulfil their obligations under these instruments in cooperation with IAEA. The G-8 partners confirmed their readiness to study joint steps which are necessary to begin the practical implementation of this initiative.

General approaches were established with regard to the importance of continuing the strengthening and universalization of multilateral instruments in the area of non-proliferation and disarmament - the NPT, the CWC, the BWC, the Hague Code of Conduct against the Proliferation of Ballistic Missiles - and increasing the capacity of IAEA to verify States' compliance with their obligations in the area of nuclear non-proliferation.

In discussing matters of non-proliferation a new focus was adopted. This was the need to develop practical measures to ensure that countries which are conscientiously fulfilling their treaty obligations have access to the benefits of the peaceful use of nuclear energy. We consider that the issues of cooperation in the use of nuclear energy and the problems of non-proliferation will not only set the tone for further interaction among the G-8 partners, but will also be more broadly reflected throughout the world.

At the summit a warm welcome was given to the initiative put forward by the President of Russia, V.V. Putin, for the creation of international centres for the provision of services in connection with the nuclear fuel cycle, which will offer an alternative to the development of sensitive elements of the nuclear fuel cycle - enrichment and reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel. A similar objective - development of atomic energy on a multilateral basis hand in hand with strengthening of the non-proliferation regime - is pursued by the initiative launched by the United States President, G. Bush, for a global nuclear energy partnership. We intend to work together with all interested countries to define and subsequently develop these initiatives with the active involvement of IAEA.

One substantive item in our work at the summit was the subject matter of the Conference on Disarmament, and the search for ways of removing the deadlock which has developed. The G-8 expressed unanimous support for the Conference and called on it to launch negotiations on the prohibition of fissile material for nuclear weapons as soon as possible, thus reaffirming the principle that the next logical step in nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament should be the conclusion of a new FMCT agreement. Of course, this does not mean that the partners moved away from their positions of principle on the priority areas of future activity in the Conference

(Mr. Loshchinin, Russian Federation)

on Disarmament. The task of agreeing a balanced programme of work within our forum is far from complete. Nevertheless, the G-8 partners considered it possible to emphasize the contribution which the Conference can and must make to solving current problems in the fields of international security, disarmament and non-proliferation.

Overall we are satisfied with the results of the summit, which we consider to be important and of contemporary relevance. They show the interest of the countries in the Group of 8 in continuing active and coordinated efforts with a view to finding answers to contemporary challenges and threats linked to the proliferation of WMD.

I would like to inform you that Russia has requested the secretariat to distribute the statement made by the G-8 at the St. Petersburg summit on non-proliferation issues as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the Ambassador of the Russian Federation for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Morocco, Mr. Mohammed Benjaber, who will speak on behalf of the Group of 21.

Mr. BENJABER (Morocco): Mr. President, on behalf of the G-21, let me at the outset begin by congratulating you on assuming the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and assuring you of the Group of 21's full cooperation and support.

The Group reaffirms that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. The Group expresses concern at the threat to humanity posed by the continued existence of nuclear weapons and of their possible use or threat of use. As long as nuclear weapons exist, the risk of their proliferation will remain.

The Group recalls the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat or use by a State of nuclear weapons in armed conflict that stated, inter alia, that there is in neither customary nor conventional international law any specific authorization of the threat or use of nuclear weapons, and that a threat or use of force by means of nuclear weapons that is contrary to Article 2, paragraph 4, of the United Nations Charter and that fails to meet all the requirements of Article 51 is unlawful.

Pending the achievement of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, the Group reaffirms the urgent need to reach an early agreement on effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. In this context, the Group recalls paragraphs 32 and 59 of the Final Document of the tenth special session of the General Assembly, the first special session devoted to disarmament, which underscores the need for effective arrangements, as appropriate, to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

(Mr. Benjaber, Morocco)

The Group notes with satisfaction that in the Conference on Disarmament there is no objection, in principle, to the idea of an international convention to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, although the difficulties with regard to developing a common approach acceptable to all have also been pointed out.

While various approaches exist, the Group expresses its conviction that efforts to conclude a universal and legally binding instrument on security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States should be pursued. The Group of 21 considers that the conclusion of such an instrument would be an important step towards achieving the objectives of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in all its aspects. The obligation of nuclear-weapon States to provide negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States, once enshrined in a legally binding instrument, will also help build the trust of non-nuclear-weapon States.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Morocco for his statement and the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Pakistan, Mr. Masood Khan.

Mr. KHAN (Pakistan): Mr. President, we congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament (CD). Your plans for the current session fit well into the common approach pursued by the six CD Presidents this year. We commend you for the efforts you have made in the past month to meet a large number of the CD members to explore common ground on the programme of work and to bridge the gaps on negative security assurances (NSAs).

We also thank Ambassador Valery Loshchinin of Russia for his able leadership of the CD and his skilful handling of the issue of prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS).

We support the statement just made by Morocco on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). We endorse the Group's call for renewed efforts to conclude a universal and legally binding instrument on security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States. This is in line with the 2003 NAM summit's call for "a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument [which] should be pursued as a matter of urgency". This is not just a moral imperative but a legal obligation.

NSAs are an integral part of the CD's work. These assurances are intrinsic to the NPT as they formed the political basis on which the treaty was extended indefinitely. Without the renewed commitment of nuclear-weapon States to NSAs in 1995, the treaty most probably would not have been extended. NSAs thus represent a crucial factor in the decisions made by the non-nuclear States, including the NAM countries.

Secretary-General Kofi Annan, while addressing us in the CD on 21 June, urged the CD to break its impasse and to bring disarmament back into the limelight of the international agenda. The Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), he said, was facing a twin crisis of compliance and of confidence. The crisis of confidence, we believe, stems partly from the absence of progress in codifying negative security assurances.

(Mr. Khan, Pakistan)

The Secretary-General did not discount the depth of the difficulty that we face in settling differences, especially over nuclear disarmament and negative security assurances. But we need to address them to meet the combined challenges of non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control.

Simply put, negative security assurances are the commitments and obligations of nuclear-weapon States not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States that have formally renounced them.

The support for NSAs is based on three elements: (a) the elimination of all nuclear weapons is the ultimate security assurance to all States; (b) pending such elimination, non-nuclear States must be given negative security assurances; and (c) NSAs should be universal, uniform, unconditional and legally binding. Hence the need for codification.

At the time of the adoption of the NPT, positive security assurances were given. United Nations Security Council resolution 255 recognized that the Council and its nuclear-weapon-State permanent members would have to act immediately to provide assistance to any non-nuclear-weapon State party to the NPT that was a victim of an act or threat of nuclear aggression. These positive assurances, given by three nuclear States, were a statement of intent, not mandatory actions or obligations. It was, however, clear right from the beginning that positive assurances alone would not be enough.

NSAs were offered by the nuclear States in connection with the 1978 and 1982 special sessions of the United Nations General Assembly. In April 1995, all nuclear-weapon States speaking to this forum - the Conference on Disarmament - offered voluntary NSAs, but they were only politically binding statements.

Since then, there has been a gradual build-up in the support for NSAs. Security Council resolution 984 (1995) recognized the legitimate interest of the non-nuclear-weapon States to receive NSAs and linked the need for security assurances to article VI of the NPT.

The 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference stated that “further steps should be considered to assure non-nuclear-weapon States ... against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons” and suggested that these steps should take the form of an “internationally legally binding instrument”.

The International Court of Justice, in 1996, in its advisory opinion, given at the request of the United Nations General Assembly, determined that, except in extreme circumstances of self-defence, the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is contrary to international law and the United Nations Charter. The Security Council resolutions or the ICJ decision cannot, however, serve as a protective shield for non-nuclear-weapon States. For that, we need a legal instrument.

(Mr. Khan, Pakistan)

Finally, NWFZ “non-use” protocols encode NSAs as an extra source of security for non-nuclear-weapons States.

Let us turn to recent events. There was a growing realization that the “cold-war-vintage” assurances did not address security needs in the post-cold-war period, because of the rapid modernization of nuclear weapons. Therefore, non-nuclear-weapon States have been demanding non-use of nuclear weapons against them under any circumstances.

The Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference made the clearest pronouncement by saying that “the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use ... [and] that legally binding security assurances by the five nuclear-weapon States ... strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime”. It asked the Preparatory Committee to make recommendations on the issue to the 2005 NPT Review Conference. This opportunity was missed, as last year’s Review Conference could not agree on an outcome.

The United Nations General Assembly last year adopted resolution 60/53 on negative security assurances with 120 in favour and none against. The General Assembly sets out the following priorities: an early agreement on effective international arrangements on NSAs; the search for a common formula or a common approach that can be included in an international instrument of a legally binding character; and intensive negotiations by the CD to reach an early agreement and conclude effective international arrangements for NSAs, taking into account the wide support for the conclusion of an international convention on NSAs. Two other General Assembly resolutions - on nuclear disarmament and reducing nuclear danger - call for negotiations and measures on NSAs.

The question is, why should NSAs be given and why should they be in the form of a legal instrument? There are several compelling reasons for doing so.

The United Nations Charter obligates nations not to use or threaten to use force. This obligation extends to nuclear weapons. The right to self-defence in this context is not unrestricted. The application of international humanitarian law requires proportionality of response in armed conflicts, both conventional and strategic.

The positive and negative assurances given so far are considered to be conditional and non-binding, amounting to political declarations. Moreover, most of the assurances would cease to be operative in case of an attack on them or their allies carried out or sustained in alliance or in association with a nuclear-weapon State. These conditions also apply to the NWFZ States. The zonal States therefore do not have cast-iron guarantees. Only one nuclear-weapon State has given unconditional NSAs to non-nuclear-weapon States and the NWFZ States.

With the indefinite extension of the NPT, most nuclear-weapon States presume that they have the right to retain nuclear weapons, while complete nuclear disarmament under article VI of the NPT remains open-ended.

(Mr. Khan, Pakistan)

The NPT Review Conference and the September summit of 2005 did not address the issues of disarmament, non-proliferation and negative security assurances. This is unfinished business; it has to be finished sooner or later. Sooner, better.

Contrary to the letter and spirit of Security Council resolutions 255 and 984, new security doctrines propound the possible use of nuclear weapons against the use or threat of use of chemical and biological weapons and against terrorism. Doctrines advocating winnable nuclear wars against non-nuclear-weapon States are not tenable.

The NAM has expressed concern over the development of new types of nuclear weapons and their possible deployment. New doctrines seem to favour the development of mini-nukes for actual battlefield use. The research on new tactical weapon designs would erode the confidence-building impact of NSAs. It would be a huge miscalculation to presume that the use of low-yield nuclear weapons would remain localized. Such use could lead to a wider nuclear escalation.

The geographical scope of the use of nuclear weapons has increased with the expansion of nuclear alliances and provisions for the sharing of nuclear weapons and command and control amongst alliance members. NATO retains the option to use nuclear weapons as part of its deterrence posture. This posture is not consistent with the pledges on NSAs made by its constituent nuclear-weapon States.

The possibilities of the right to use “overwhelming force”, understood to include nuclear weapons, and nuclear response to non-nuclear weapons of mass destruction tend to weaken the fragile NSA regime, if it can be characterized as such.

Additionally, there are two declared, and one undeclared, nuclear-weapon States.

For its part, Pakistan has made a solemn pledge that we will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States.

All along Pakistan has been trying to build consensus around NSAs. It was due to the efforts of Pakistan and several other CD members that we were able to establish an Ad Hoc Committee on NSAs in 1998, which regrettably could not continue its work. In the CD, extensive groundwork has been done on developing a legally binding instrument on NSAs. There are unilateral declarations that can be refined to make them uniform. Several drafts for an international convention have already been submitted to the CD under the relevant items. Over the years, the NAM and the New Agenda Coalition countries have submitted working papers and proposals. Significantly, many NATO non-nuclear-weapon States - notably Norway, Sweden, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Belgium - have proposed language to bridge the differences on NSAs.

The WMD Commission, in its report Weapons of Terror released in June this year, gives the clearest advice to the CD on NSAs. It makes the determination that, after the signing of the NPT, it was clearly understood that “non-nuclear-weapon States would seek additional legally

(Mr. Khan, Pakistan)

binding assurances - known as negative security assurances - against attacks or threats of attack involving weapons that they have themselves ... renounced". The Commission notes that there is no objection in principle in the CD to the negotiation of an agreement on NSAs. It has recommended to this forum to move forward with negotiations on a universal, multilateral treaty containing effective international arrangements on NSAs.

A legally binding instrument on NSAs would be the least complicated from a technical point of view as it would require no financial or secretariat obligations for monitoring. No issue is riper for negotiations than NSAs. It has been on the front burner of the NPT regime since 1968, and on the CD agenda since its inception.

By elaborating and codifying unconditional NSAs, the CD would help create a climate of confidence between nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon States in the present tense international environment, and provide incentives for disarmament and non-proliferation, as noted by the NAM statement today.

We should quickly plug loopholes in the NSAs, not widen them. If NSAs are not legally binding, they will remain mere diplomatic niceties, leaving the disarmament and non-proliferation regime weak and vulnerable.

Let me conclude by quoting Josef Goldblat, a known authority on NSAs, who in one of his recent presentations to a group of CD Ambassadors said: "The possibility of resorting to nuclear weapons will, of course, not disappear after the conclusion of the proposed non-use treaty. It would ... diminish the risk of nuclear war and weaken the political force of explicit and implicit threats to initiate such a war."

While I have the floor, I would like to say a farewell to Ambassador Amina Mohamed of Kenya, who is moving on to take up another important assignment. Her CD colleagues in Geneva have benefited from her wise counsel, her constructive conduct and her substantial contribution. She has been a good friend, a consensus builder and an effective leader.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the Ambassador of Pakistan for his statement and for his kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt, Mr. Amin Meleika, who will speak on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition.

Mr. MELEIKA (Egypt): Mr. President, on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition formed by Brazil, Ireland, Mexico, South Africa, Sweden, New Zealand and my own country, Egypt, let me congratulate you on presiding over this Conference and offer you our best wishes and support for your term in the Chair. As members of this body are fully aware, the New Agenda Coalition is a cross-regional initiative established for the purpose of advancing the cause of nuclear disarmament.

(Mr. Meleika, Egypt)

The CD has been unable to fully and satisfactorily fulfil its mandate for the last decade. It is of particular concern that this body has failed to engage in substantive work which produces concrete results on nuclear disarmament and on PAROS or to begin negotiations on banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons. These failures have not only brought into question the credibility of the Conference on Disarmament but have done nothing to strengthen the Non-Proliferation Treaty itself.

We also regret the lack of any substantive outcome of the 2005 NPT Review Conference, as well as the inability of the General Assembly, at its 2005 World Summit, to reach agreement on matters relating to nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. This reflects a lack of political will to effectively deal with disarmament and non-proliferation issues that remain central to the promotion of international peace and security.

More than ever before, the New Agenda Coalition expects the CD to get down to work and produce substantive results. We acknowledge the efforts that have been made to overcome the impasse in the CD. We also are of the view that the structured debates based on all items of the agenda for this year's session are an innovative attempt to create a more receptive atmosphere that could help us commence negotiations.

The encouraging results of the "structured debates" on nuclear disarmament (items 1 and 2 of the agenda) have shown us that there are numerous important nuclear disarmament issues that should be systematically dealt with in the CD. Some of the concrete items that should be included within this framework are: full and transparent reporting of what has already been done and what the envisaged future initiatives towards nuclear disarmament are; the review of military doctrines in order to diminish the role of nuclear weapons; and full adherence and respect for the existing nuclear-weapon-free-zone treaties and the promotion of new ones.

We welcome the constructive discussions this year, which we hope can be built upon in pursuit of substantive results, but this cannot be a substitute for such results. Therefore, we strongly urge CD members to exert all possible efforts so that concrete work can begin. This will require a degree of compromise from all States. The current agenda gives us the required flexibility to agree on a solution, one that allows us to deal adequately with each of the core issues.

Our countries have always strongly advocated a treaty on fissile material. We have paid attention to the positive indications from various members of the CD and are encouraged by the wide support for the immediate commencement of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material, as reflected most recently in the structured debate in the CD. We have taken note of the proposal put forward by the United States for a mandate for an ad hoc committee to deal with this issue. We welcome this development and will continue to strive in good faith and dedication towards the conclusion of a treaty. From our point of view, for such a treaty to be meaningful, it would need to include a verification mechanism and existing stocks.

(Mr. Meleika, Egypt)

Regarding the NPT, the strong support for the Coalition's United Nations General Assembly resolutions on nuclear disarmament since 1998, coupled with similar resolutions, like the one tabled last year by Japan, which was unanimously supported by NAC members, surely demonstrates increased impatience and dissatisfaction with progress under article VI of the NPT. The review process for the 2010 Review Conference must be different from the previous one. We need to see action taken in response to commitments already made, including the practical steps for the systematic and progressive implementation of article VI of the NPT. It is equally important to recall the decisions adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference, including the resolution on the Middle East. We are ready to engage with other parties to the Treaty in a comprehensive discussion on the way forward.

The NPT remains the cornerstone of the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime. The three pillars of the NPT - non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and peaceful uses - constitute an important foundation in maintaining international peace and security. Indeed, without each one of these three pillars, there would not have been a treaty. Achieving the universality of the NPT is indispensable in further promoting international peace and security, and the international community needs to exert all possible efforts in order to reach this desired objective. We call upon all States parties to spare no effort to achieve the universality of the NPT, and urge India, Israel and Pakistan to accede to it as non-nuclear-weapon States promptly and without conditions.

It is always appropriate to recall the unambiguous statement from the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference, to which all States parties agreed: "The Conference reaffirms that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons." The achievement of this goal would contribute significantly to offset the risk of nuclear proliferation to States as well as non-State actors. Attempts to secure advances on non-proliferation while diminishing the significance of nuclear disarmament are counterproductive. Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing processes.

The new Agenda Coalition is prepared to play its part in safeguarding the NPT regime and securing a balanced approach during the next review cycle.

The New Agenda Coalition is deeply concerned about plans to research the development of new weapons or the modification of existing ones. We will also continue to insist on further reductions in strategic and non-strategic nuclear arsenals and put into practice steps agreed upon.

If nuclear disarmament measures are to gain the confidence of the international community, they must incorporate the essential elements of irreversibility, verification and transparency. We need more than the mere reiteration of solemn undertakings entered into at past Review Conferences; these undertakings must also be fulfilled. In this context, we reiterate full support for broader and systematic participation, in the CD and in the NPT context, of non-governmental organizations who advocate a world without nuclear weapons.

(Mr. Meleika, Egypt)

There have been increasing concerns about the lack of compliance with an implementation of the commitments made in the context of the “non-proliferation regime”. The New Agenda is also concerned about the risk of non-State actors gaining access to nuclear weapons. Despite strenuous efforts by many States, vast amounts of unsafeguarded nuclear material worldwide remain susceptible to theft and diversion.

There is only one guarantee that a nuclear weapon will never again be used, and that is the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. As we have been reminded recently in the WMD Commission report: “So long as any State has nuclear weapons ... others will want them. So long as any such weapons remain ... there is a ... risk that they will one day be used, by design or accident. [And] any such use would be catastrophic.”

In conclusion, the New Agenda’s main objective is a world free of nuclear weapons. The Conference on Disarmament should do its part in this endeavour if it intends to be still relevant.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Egypt for his statement and the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Nigeria, Mr. Joseph U. Ayalogu.

Mr. AYALOGU (Nigeria): Mr. President, let me seize this opportunity to congratulate you, my dear friend, on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. My delegation assures you of its support and cooperation during your presidency.

Since the beginning of the year, the P6 have injected life into the CD and the thematic structured debates have provided better understanding and appreciation of the issues, the various positions and priorities. The P6 have provided the path for negotiations which will become necessary when we are able to agree on a work programme. I therefore wish to congratulate your predecessors on their wonderful contribution to our work. I support the statement made by Morocco on behalf of the G-21.

Since the development and use of nuclear weapons, States have continued to express concerns about their security and also called for banning of these weapons. In this connection, we recall that the first resolution of the United Nations General Assembly was on nuclear weapons. In addition, the Final Document of the tenth special session of the United Nations General Assembly (resolution S-10/2) and the first special session of the United Nations General Assembly on disarmament underscored the importance of taking effective measures to achieve nuclear disarmament and prevent nuclear war. The special session also reaffirmed the need for effective arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

We have witnessed some positive progress - even though very slow - towards nuclear disarmament. The Chemical Weapons and Biological Weapons Conventions are now being implemented, but more efforts are needed to effectively implement, strengthen and universalize

(Mr. Ayalogu, Nigeria)

them. The CTBT, which would have put a stop to the quantitative and qualitative research and development of nuclear weapons, is yet to come into force. In view of its importance in securing our collective security, we would urge those countries that are yet to ratify the instrument to do so.

As long as nuclear weapons exist, they will constitute a threat to both the haves and have-nots. The only effective and credible guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is their total elimination. In the history of mankind, various types of weapons have been deployed in warfare. That being the case, nuclear weapons, regardless of who possesses them, constitute a grave threat to others. It only provides false security to those who possess them because the consequences of continued existence of nuclear weapons far outweigh its benefits. It should also be noted that not only does the existence of nuclear weapons constitute a threat to international security, it also encourages proliferation. In this regard, the efforts against proliferation will not be successful until there is a total ban on and elimination of nuclear weapons. Throughout the thematic structured debates on nuclear weapons, fissile materials and the prevention of an arms race in outer space, there was consensus of opinion that nuclear weapons constitute a real danger to humanity and the survival of civilizations, especially when they fall into the hands of non-State actors. It is sadly evident that negotiating a convention banning nuclear weapons remains a daunting challenge.

However, pending the time nuclear disarmament is universally achieved, the international community must find an effective measure to ensure the security of non-nuclear-weapon States. Non-nuclear-weapon States, particularly parties to the NPT, deserve to be encouraged and rewarded with internationally and legally binding negative and positive security assurances. Having renounced the nuclear option voluntarily and also, faithfully implementing their obligations under the NPT, these States have a legitimate right to receive legally binding assurances that nuclear weapons will not be used against or to threaten them.

The unilateral declarations made by four nuclear-weapon States and Security Council resolutions 255 of 19 June 1968 and 984 of 4 November 1995 on security assurances have not fulfilled the expectations and requirements of the non-nuclear-weapon States. Nigeria believes that providing an unconditional, uniform, comprehensive and effective internationally legally binding negative and positive security assurance to non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT is absolutely necessary for their security. This becomes important in view of the continued existence of nuclear weapons as well as the emergence of new military doctrines.

The basic obligations expected under NSAs is for nuclear-weapon States, including those outside the NPT, to undertake, through a legally binding instrument, a commitment not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States that have voluntarily given up the nuclear option. The instrument should serve to engage nuclear-weapon States, both within and outside the NPT, to provide protection to non-nuclear-weapon States. It should further ensure that all States refrain from the use of force in their international relations.

(Mr. Ayalogu, Nigeria)

A State party that believes that there has been or is likely to be a breach of obligations under the NSA may request the convening of an emergency meeting of the Conference of States Parties and/or the Security Council with a view to preventing the breach or redressing the situation. In the event of nuclear aggression or the threat of such aggression against a non-nuclear-weapon State, the Conference of States Parties should provide the necessary protection and assistance to that State.

We also consider that an NSA should have a duration as long as nuclear weapons exist. Finally, we urge better understanding and appreciation of the importance of these issues by all States, particularly in view of the precarious international security environment today.

While I still have the floor, I would like to join my colleagues in saying farewell to our dear colleague Ambassador Amina Mohamed, who has been a shining example of, I must say, African diplomatic women, especially in the work of the CD, as well as in her activities in the other multilateral forums. As she moves on, as we all do, I wish her well.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Nigeria for his statement and the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Morocco, Mr. Mohammed Benjaber.

Mr. BENJABER (Morocco) (translated from French): First of all I should also like, on behalf of my Ambassador, to express my feelings of friendship and respect for Ms. Amina Mohamed, the Permanent Representative of Kenya, who will shortly be leaving us, and wish her all the best in the next part of her career.

My delegation associates itself with the G-21 statement on the question of NSAs made earlier this morning. Morocco, being convinced of the urgent need to halt a nuclear arms race which imperilled international peace and security, became involved at an early stage in efforts to establish an international, effective and verifiable regime for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

The conclusion of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 1968, limiting the number of nuclear-weapon States to five, was not an end in itself, but a first step towards general and complete disarmament under effective international control. There is no need to recall that this historic agreement would not have been possible without the clear and unambiguous commitment of the nuclear-weapon States, on the one hand, to pursue in good faith negotiations aimed at achieving the aforementioned objective, and on the other hand, to guarantee the security of the non-nuclear-weapon States. However, pending the total and final destruction of existing nuclear arsenals, the security of the non-nuclear-weapon States needed to be ensured, under this nuclear status quo, in particular by means of guarantees against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, solemnly granted in 1995 on the eve of the indefinite extension of the NPT. These statements of commitment were endorsed by the United Nations Security Council in resolution 984 of 11 April 1995.

(Mr. Benjaber, Morocco)

In the same year, the NPT Review and Extension Conference, in decision 2 “Principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament”, called for a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument. On 8 July 1996 the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice backed up the motion against the threat or use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. Finally, in 2000, the States meeting at the Sixth NPT Review Conference did not confine themselves to reaffirming the importance of legally binding security assurances in strengthening the non-proliferation regime, but also requested the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review Conference to draft recommendations on the question.

Eleven years after the extension of the NPT, it is only fair that the non-nuclear weapon States should call for the formalization of this commitment in a legally binding document. During the 2005 NPT Review Conference, because of the lack of a consensus, the non-aligned group unfortunately failed in its efforts to commit the international community to this course. Morocco regrets the loss of the impetus which the international community displayed at the 2000 Review Conference in favour of negative security assurances and the reduction of the role of nuclear weapons in the security policies of the nuclear-weapon States. In that regard, it is worth noting that only one of those States committed itself not to be the first to use nuclear weapons.

Morocco believes that negative security guarantees should apply to all States parties to the NPT which have renounced the acquisition of nuclear weapons, and should not be limited to States which are members of nuclear-weapon-free zones. In the present context of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, these assurances are necessary as an urgent confidence-building measure and a guarantee of international stability and security. They would also reinforce the legitimacy and effectiveness of the embattled NPT.

As a sign of universal recognition of the relevance of the conclusion of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of these weapons, a resolution is adopted annually by the United Nations General Assembly reaffirming the need to reach an early agreement on such arrangements and appealing to all States, especially the nuclear-weapon States, to work actively towards an early agreement on a common approach, and in particular, a common formula that could be included in an international instrument of a legally binding character. The resolution also refers to the contribution that the Conference on Disarmament could make by recommending that it should actively continue intensive negotiations with a view to reaching early agreement, taking into account the widespread support for the conclusion of an international convention and giving consideration to any other proposals designed to secure the same objective. In supporting this resolution, the Kingdom of Morocco reaffirms its conviction that until nuclear disarmament is universal, it is indispensable for the international community to devise effective measures and arrangements to guarantee the security of non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of nuclear weapons, and for such arrangements also to help to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. At a time when we are engaged in advanced discussions on the various items on the

(Mr. Benjaber, Morocco)

agenda of our Conference which we hope will allow substantive work to resume in this unique multilateral body of the international community, my delegation cannot refrain from expressing the hope that consensus can finally be reached on a common formula that can feature in an international instrument of a legally binding character granting negative security assurances to the non-nuclear-weapon States.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Morocco for his statement. I now give the floor to our distinguished colleague, the Ambassador of Kenya, Ms. Amina Mohamed.

Ms. MOHAMED (Kenya): Mr. President, I congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament, confident that you will guide our work very much as you have carried out all your responsibilities in Geneva over the last few years, with proven diplomatic skill, immense experience and with a huge dose of African wisdom. The delegation of Kenya assures you of its support and cooperation during your presidency.

I would also like to thank you and other members of the CD most sincerely for the very kind words that you have addressed to me and my delegation. May I also take this opportunity to thank Ambassador Loshchinin of Russia for his leadership?

Kenya aligns itself fully with the views expressed by Morocco on behalf of the Group of 21. As a farewell statement at the CD, I could not - even if I tried - have chosen a more appropriate subject nor a more appropriate President. I come, like the President, from a poor, developing country, a member of the NPT, with no nuclear-weapon ambitions, and terrified of the power of destruction that nuclear weapons can wreak indiscriminately, a power over which not only do we not have any democratic say but against whose destructive use we have neither defence nor safeguard. Kenya is therefore gratified that the WMD Commission has made a clear recommendation on NSA, sensing that in fact there is no objection to addressing this issue conclusively in this chamber, and as soon as possible.

We know, as you all do, that so long as nuclear weapons continue to exist, they will continue to pose a threat to our common international peace and security, and indeed to our own very survival. As a non-nuclear-weapon State, we feel and remain vulnerable to nuclear attack or threat. While of course the best assurance against nuclear threat is the total elimination of nuclear weapons, the legitimate interest of the non-nuclear-weapon States in credible assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons has been recognized, inter alia by the Security Council in its resolution 984 of 1995.

My delegation continues to call upon the nuclear-weapon States to take practical steps to fulfil their part of the bargain, to engage in good-faith negotiations so as to reach a satisfactory agreement and to end the crisis of confidence that we have all become hostage to.

(Mr. Mohamed, Kenya)

Urgent measures must be undertaken to have an early agreement on effective international arrangements to assure us non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Furthermore, Kenya believes that efforts should be accelerated to conclude a universal and legally binding instrument on security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States, an essential step in the process of achieving non-proliferation in all its aspects. The WMDC has confirmed what our accumulated wisdom has informed us of over the ages - that our ultimate goal must remain the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to bid farewell to the Conference on Disarmament, which has been aptly described as the best and most exclusive club in town. It has been a sobering and enriching experience for me to have been part of this exclusive club for five and a half years and to have had the opportunity, the privilege and the honour of presiding over it at the beginning of 2004. I leave with the satisfaction that we have collectively begun to take the future into our hands and there is a new sense of purpose at the Conference on Disarmament, as well as a clear understanding of the importance of the responsibilities of the tasks before us at a time of extreme international tension. In fact, a lot depends on the CD.

I'd like to congratulate you on the development of a timetable for the whole year, for the increased level of engagement and the tone of engagement that demonstrates our common readiness to move forward, the continuity that has been established through the mechanism of the Friends of the President and the focused thematic debates that we have just begun to have.

I'll continue to be more than an interested observer in the work of the Conference, and I hope that in the near future we can bridge the differences and fulfil the expectations of the international community and especially of the non-nuclear-weapon States.

I thank all my dear colleagues and all those who have supported me during my time as Kenya's representative to the Conference on Disarmament.

Last, but not least - in fact, most importantly - allow me to say thank you to the secretariat, Ambassador Tim Caughley and his collaborators who carry out their responsibilities in a calm, collected and admirable manner and who have contributed immensely to the continued optimism that is reflected in our discussions - and this, against all odds.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): Thank you very much, Madam Ambassador, for the words of praise addressed to the Chair, but also for the encouragement you have given to the Conference, the moving words which will echo in our minds. I think that very shortly, I hope, you will have good news from the Conference on Disarmament. I now give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation, Mr. Anton Vasiliev.

Mr. VASILIEV (Russian Federation) (translated from Russian): I should like to read out a statement by Ambassador Loshchinin at his request, since he has had to leave the room on urgent business, but first of all we would also like to thank the distinguished

(Mr. Vasiliev, Russian Federation)

Ambassador Amina Mohamed for her friendship, cooperation and contribution to the work of the Conference on Disarmament, and to wish her all the best on the occasion of her forthcoming departure.

In the interests of reaching a compromise on the Conference on Disarmament's programme of work, the Russian Federation would be ready not to object to the consensus on the issue of the programme of work based on the last version of the "five Ambassadors' proposal" (CD/1693/Rev.1). In this context we would also not object to the proposal formulated in it concerning the establishment of a CD ad hoc committee on the issue of security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

We have noted many times that we would also be ready to support consensus based on the "food for thought" non-paper by Ambassador C. Sanders, including the proposed mandate for work on the issue of security assurances contained in it. We realize the significance of this issue for many countries, and we are prepared to take into account the concerns they have expressed. Russia would be ready to move towards the drafting of a global agreement on negative security assurances, provided, of course, that it took into consideration our military doctrine and national security concept.

This issue of security assurances is particularly important within the NPT context. The provision and implementation of such assurances is a fundamental task for all parties to the Treaty. We highlighted this at the Review Conference last year. Russia has been consistently supporting the aspiration of non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT to obtain such assurances. In our view, the achievement of this objective would contribute to the universalization of the Treaty, the strengthening of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, and confidence and predictability in relations between States.

We should like to point out that in 1995, Russia along with other nuclear Powers co-sponsored the United Nations Security Council resolution whereby positive security assurances were provided and national declarations by the nuclear-weapon States on negative assurances were taken into consideration. The obligations of the nuclear States in respect of negative assurances have already acquired a legally binding character under protocols to the treaties on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. Russia has signed such protocols to the treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga and Pelindaba. This number will grow as new nuclear-free zones are established. We are ready to contribute to these processes in every possible way. In encouraging efforts to create new nuclear-weapon-free zones, Russia views them in the light of the need to strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime and enhance regional security.

We welcome the efforts undertaken by the Central Asian States to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in their region. We support the draft treaty on a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia agreed upon by those States. Russia remains ready to settle the remaining issues with regard to the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone through dialogue between the nuclear Powers and the ASEAN States.

(Mr. Vasiliev, Russian Federation)

The lack of progress in efforts to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East gives cause for concern, especially as the military and political situation in the region remains complicated. We believe that the issue of establishing a nuclear-free zone in South Asia remains topical, as this would strengthen regional stability and security.

The Conference on Disarmament, in our view, is the most appropriate venue for work on security assurances, particularly owing to its unique format as a multilateral disarmament forum. As you have already noted today, Mr. President, in the past during the years when its Ad Hoc Committee on security assurances was active, the CD accumulated significant intellectual experience on this issue. While building on the existing experience, we must at the same time take into consideration the dynamic changes in the situation which have occurred in recent years and set realistic and achievable objectives. Negative security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT are an important instrument for strengthening security and stability in the world. Russia is ready to continue its active work to secure progress in this direction.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for his statement. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of India, Mr. Jayant Prasad.

Mr. PRASAD (India): Mr. President, please accept my delegation's warm felicitation on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference. You have our full cooperation. We are confident that, under your leadership, members of the Conference will continue their active engagement in structured discussions on all the important issues on its agenda in their common quest for a consensus on a programme of work.

We would like to take this opportunity to compliment your predecessor, Ambassador Loshchinin of the Russian Federation, for organizing productive and useful discussions on especially the "Prevention of an arms race in outer space" as also "New types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons: radiological weapons". We hope that these, as also the ensuing discussions in the current CD session, will contribute to our collective endeavour to break the current impasse.

Today I intend to spell out India's perspective on "Effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons".

India has long held the view that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. I would, therefore, like to reiterate India's deep and undiminished commitment to the goal of global, verifiable and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament, leading to a nuclear-weapons-free world.

Nuclear disarmament remains India's core foreign policy concern. We are, therefore, fully committed to working towards this objective. We welcome the steps taken to reduce the number of nuclear weapons in the possession of the Russian Federation and the United States and hope that steps will be taken to further reduce the stockpiles.

(Mr. Prasad, India)

Pending nuclear disarmament, we need measures to reduce the nuclear danger, including the threat of accidental or unintentional use of nuclear weapons. Also, there is an urgent need to take all necessary measures to prevent terrorists from gaining access to nuclear devices or related materials, equipment, technology and means of their delivery.

The non-nuclear-weapon States have consistently sought effective international arrangements to assure themselves against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. They have regarded the collective assurances provided so far, including those contained in Security Council resolutions 255 of 1968 and 984 of 1995, as overburdened with conditions and caveats and have called for, instead, legally binding assurances. The Final Document of the first special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament in 1978 underscored the need for such arrangements, and this matter has been on the agenda of the Conference since the following year.

Neither Working Groups of the Conference, until 1983, nor its Ad Hoc Committees, between 1984 and 1994, made much progress in evolving credible and effective assurances. The non-aligned States consider such assurances a matter of urgent attention. Meeting at the ministerial level at Putrajaya 10 weeks ago, the NAM Coordinating Bureau called for the conclusion, at the Conference on Disarmament, of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on security assurances as a matter of priority, pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

While considering the issue of effective international arrangements for assuring non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, the Conference must also consider related and complementary proposals on reaching an understanding on no first use of nuclear weapons and negotiating a convention prohibiting the use of nuclear weapons in any circumstances. Besides its other benefits, such as rendering nuclear weapons redundant and reducing their salience for military strategy, such a convention will reinforce security assurances.

India's proposal for a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons, first tabled in the United Nations General Assembly in 1982, calls upon the Conference to commence negotiations on an international convention prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances. We believe this would be a decisive step towards reducing the danger of nuclear weapons, including their accidental or unauthorized or unintentional use, and their eventual total elimination.

India's nuclear doctrine is based on a posture of no first use and non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. Nuclear weapons will only be used in retaliation against a nuclear attack on Indian territory or on Indian forces anywhere. We have thus provided the assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States. India is prepared to enshrine its commitments in legally binding instruments or arrangements.

(Mr. Prasad, India)

In this context, India respects the choice of a large number of non-nuclear-weapon States in establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the regions concerned. India's policy of non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States extends to States parties to treaties establishing the nuclear-weapon-free zones. Given their geographical limitations, the security assurances provided to States of these zones are not universal and, therefore, cannot become a substitute for universal, legally binding arrangements on security assurances.

India has, therefore, consistently supported the proposal for establishing an ad hoc committee under this agenda item to negotiate with a view to reaching agreement on effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Indeed, these arrangements could take the form of a legally binding multilateral undertaking that is credible and universal. This would enhance the sense of security of all States. The five Ambassadors' proposal on the CD's programme of work reflects this.

India is committed to working together with other members of the Conference to seek ways to begin substantive work on all the core issues on its agenda, in a manner that takes into account the concerns and priorities of all member States and secures their support. We hope that our deliberations today, and during the coming weeks, will contribute to this process.

Before I conclude, I would like to compliment Ambassador Amina Mohamed for her initiative and energy and her solid and sustained commitment and contribution to multilateralism, extending from international security and disarmament to trade and development issues, and wish her the very best for the future.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the Ambassador of India for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of China, Mr. Cheng Jingye.

Mr. CHENG (China) (translated from Chinese): Mr. President, since this is the first time that I take the floor under your presidency, allow me at the outset to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference. You may count on the full cooperation of the Chinese delegation. We believe that, under your able guidance, the Conference will be able to have a valuable and productive debate on the issue of negative security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States.

The provision of security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States is a matter of great importance in the field of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation and is also one of the main issues on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament. The issue has been with us for a long time. Even before the launching of negotiations on a non-proliferation treaty, non-nuclear-weapon States had long been pressing their legitimate insistent demands that the nuclear-weapon States provide them with security assurances, and their efforts have borne some fruit.

(Mr. Cheng, China)

Under Security Council resolutions 225 and 984, the nuclear-weapon States are required, to a certain extent, to provide both positive and negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States. Over recent years the international community has continued its efforts to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones and, by signing and ratifying protocols to various nuclear-weapon-free-zone treaties, the nuclear-weapon States have provided security assurances to the States parties to those treaties. In 1979, the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament, which subsequently evolved into the current Conference on Disarmament, established an ad hoc working group on security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States and, thereafter, repeatedly reconstituted an ad hoc committee on the issue as a forum in which it could be discussed in depth. The issue has also been discussed extensively in the United Nations General Assembly and in the process of reviewing the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Regrettably, however, to this day the non-nuclear-weapon States have still not been given any unconditional security assurances by any of the nuclear-weapon States to the effect that they will not use nuclear weapons against them. No negotiations have yet been launched on an international legal instrument on security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States.

At the same time, in recent years there have been some disturbing tendencies in the international security situation. The development of a pre-emptive nuclear strategy, the increasingly important role of nuclear weapons in national security policies and the establishment of nuclear strike plans targeting non-nuclear-weapon States all render more urgent the need to resolve the issue properly.

Security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States are not a unilateral favour granted to non-nuclear-weapon States by nuclear-weapon States. By refraining from developing nuclear weapons the non-nuclear-weapon States can also contribute to the cause of preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and nuclear disarmament, a cause which clearly serves the interests of world peace and stability. The provision of security assurances to such States will enhance their sense of security and reduce their motivation to acquire nuclear weapons, and will therefore play a positive role in preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and safeguarding the international nuclear non-proliferation regime, for which the Non-Proliferation Treaty serves as a cornerstone. Such action will also help create a positive and sound international and regional environment for nuclear disarmament.

The demands of the non-nuclear-weapon States that they should not be subject to threats from nuclear weapons and their insistence that the corresponding assurances should be provided in a legally binding form are both reasonable and fully justified.

The new Security Council resolution on security assurances is not the same thing as an international legal instrument, and its content is limited. An international legal instrument on negative security assurances will be conducive to addressing the issue in a comprehensive, effective and sustainable way. Accordingly, under current circumstances, the early commencement of negotiations on negative security assurances remains a realistic prospect in the context of international arms control and disarmament.

(Mr. Cheng, China)

At its sixtieth session, the United Nations General Assembly once again adopted a resolution appealing to all States, and in particular the nuclear-weapon States, to work actively towards the early conclusion of an international legal instrument on negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States and recommending that the Conference on Disarmament actively continue intensive negotiations that end.

Complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons represent the most essential means of resolving the issue of negative security assurances. Before that objective can be attained, all nuclear-weapon States should undertake not to be the first to use nuclear weapons, never, at any time or under any circumstances, to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or nuclear-weapon-free zones and to conclude an international legal instrument to this effect at an early date.

Since the very first day when it gained possession of nuclear weapons, China has solemnly maintained that, at no time and under no circumstances would it ever be the first to use nuclear weapons, or to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States and nuclear-weapon-free zones. China has undertaken to initiate measures within the framework of the United Nations Security Council should any non-nuclear-weapon State come under nuclear attack, to ensure that the Council takes appropriate steps in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations to provide the necessary assistance to the attacked State and to impose strict and effective sanctions on the attacking State. In a statement issued in 1995 the Chinese Government clearly reaffirmed the above position.

China has long been calling on all nuclear States to conclude a treaty on the non-first use of nuclear weapons. China and the Russian Federation have already concluded an agreement on the non-first use of nuclear weapons against each other.

China has signed and ratified all protocols to those treaties on nuclear-weapon-free zones which are open for signature. China has also reached agreement with ASEAN on a protocol to the treaty on the Southeast Asia nuclear-weapon-free zone and hopes that the outstanding issues between ASEAN and the other four nuclear-weapon States can be resolved at an early stage so that the protocol can be opened for signature as soon as possible. China supports the efforts of the five Central Asian countries to set up a nuclear-weapon-free zone. We have no difficulty with the current text of the treaty on a Central Asian nuclear-weapon-free zone and its protocol and hope that agreement can be reached between the five Central Asian countries and other nuclear-weapon States at the earliest possible juncture. China also steadfastly supports the United Nations resolution on a nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas.

China supports the Conference on Disarmament in its efforts to establish an ad hoc committee on negative security assurances in accordance with the mandate contained in the proposal by the five ambassadors, with a view to initiating the substantive work of negotiating an international legal instrument on security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States. We also

(Mr. Cheng, China)

agree to the negotiation of a protocol on negative security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States within the framework of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. China will give favourable consideration to any proposal or initiative that is conducive to progress on security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States.

It is China's hope that the aspirations of non-nuclear-weapon States for universal and legally binding security assurances will be realized at an early date, and we shall continue our unremitting endeavours to that end.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the Ambassador of China for his kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Malaysia, Ms. Hsu King Bee.

Ms. HSU (Malaysia): Mr. President, Malaysia congratulates you on your assumption of the presidency of the CD and assures you of our support and cooperation in your endeavours to move the Conference forward and begin its substantive work. Malaysia associates itself with the statement made by Morocco on behalf of the Group of 21.

Developments in the field of disarmament in the past several years have been variously described as minimal progress, stagnation or setbacks. If left unchecked, this situation will certainly undermine international peace and security. As outlined in the recent report of the WMD Commission, issues that should be urgently addressed include the slow pace of disarmament, violations of non-proliferation commitments, the threat of WMD terrorism and the increased risk of the use of nuclear weapons.

Malaysia cannot but agree with the WMD Commission on the urgent need to revive meaningful negotiations on various multilateral and legally binding instruments on disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation, including negative security assurances. We also firmly believe that given new nuclear doctrines that emphasize the use of nuclear weapons to deter or retaliate against the use of other weapons of mass destruction, negative security assurances have become even more crucial for the safety and security of States, in particular those who have opted to forgo their nuclear options by joining the Non-Proliferation Treaty as non-nuclear-weapons States in return for the unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapons States to undertake systematic and progressive efforts towards nuclear disarmament.

We note that the five nuclear-weapons States unilaterally declared that they would provide both positive and negative security assurances on the eve of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. Nonetheless, we are of the view that these pledges are inadequate to prevent the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapons States, as these could easily be withdrawn or changed. More importantly, these pledges are conditional, as nuclear-weapons States reserve their right to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States under certain conditions.

(Ms. Hsu, Malaysia)

Given the limitations of those unilateral declarations, Malaysia reiterates the need for multilateral, legally binding and unconditional assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons to non-nuclear-weapons States. Having voluntarily forsworn the nuclear weapons option under the NPT regime, we should be accorded assurances that are unlimited in scope, application and duration. Furthermore, nuclear-weapons States have the responsibility to avoid the use of nuclear weapons, in particular against non-nuclear-weapons States, as Article 2.4 of the United Nations Charter calls on Member States to refrain from the use or threat of use of force.

Malaysia firmly believes that effective measures to protect non-nuclear weapons States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons would not only strengthen international peace and security but also positively contribute to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Thus, it is in the interest of nuclear-weapons States to address the issue of NSA comprehensively.

We have heard views from some members of this Conference that the best and most practical method to deal with the issue of NSA would be through nuclear-weapons-free-zone treaties. Malaysia agrees that the establishment of such zones constitutes a positive step towards attaining the objective of global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and we welcome continued efforts aimed at establishing new zones in all regions of the world, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States concerned.

We also firmly believe that the establishment of nuclear-weapons-free zones in an effective measure of geographical limitation of nuclear proliferation, and contributes to the twin goals of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. It is in this regard that Malaysia, together with other members of the Association of Southeast Asia countries, created the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in the 1997 Bangkok Treaty.

This Treaty, which entered into force on 2 March 1997, is not only aimed at keeping the Southeast Asia region free from nuclear weapons, but also at protecting the region from environmental pollution and the hazards posed by radioactive waste and other toxic materials. ASEAN member countries have exerted much effort in ensuring effective implementation of the Treaty. This includes our decade-long ongoing consultations with all nuclear-weapons States to accede to the Protocol of the Treaty, which inter alia would provide assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

While noting that security assurances have been provided by nuclear-weapons States to all States parties to the Treaties of Tlatelolco and Rarotonga through their respective protocols, we remain deeply concerned that not all nuclear-weapons States have either signed or ratified the protocols to the Treaty of Bangkok and the Treaty of Pelindaba. With regard to the Protocol to the Treaty of Bangkok, we welcome China's readiness to accede and urge the other four nuclear-weapons States to resolve outstanding issues without delay. Particularly as nuclear-weapons States have not acceded to all existing protocols to nuclear-weapons-free-zone treaties, the CD should pursue as a matter of priority the conclusion of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on security assurances.

(Ms. Hsu, Malaysia)

We view NSA as one of the important issues that the CD and other disarmament forums should resolve, since NSA was a key factor in the agreement to extend the NPT indefinitely. Pending agreement on a programme of work, the CD could begin discussion on key issues concerning NSA, which should include the following: the potential beneficiaries of security assurances; the identification of States providing the security assurances; the nature and scope of security assurances being provided; the elements that would need to be included in a legally binding instrument on security assurances; and the format in which the security assurances would be provided.

In the light of the challenge to the international security environment posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, it is vital for the nuclear-weapons States to demonstrate their full commitment to nuclear disarmament in order to prevent the potential decline of international confidence in the NPT regime. Pending nuclear disarmament, strengthening the NSA represents an important and achievable step towards the commitments undertaken by nuclear-weapons States pursuant to article VI of the NPT. In this regard, and in line with the Final Document of the thirteenth NAM summit, which was reaffirmed at the ministerial-level meeting of the NAM Coordinating Bureau in Malaysia in May this year, we reiterate the call to all members of the Conference to pursue as a matter of priority the conclusion of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States. We look forward to working with members of the Conference to continue to explore all available avenues for a balanced and comprehensive programme of work in order to commence substantive work in the CD.

Finally, I too would like to take this opportunity to say farewell to Ambassador Amina and to say how much we appreciate her invaluable contributions to the multilateral process in Geneva, including at the CD. We wish her every success in all her future undertakings.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the Ambassador of Malaysia for her statement and her kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Algeria, Mr. Idriss Jazairy.

Mr. JAZAIRY (Algeria) (translated from Arabic): Mr. President, I am proud to see you chairing our work. In doing so you are honouring our continent of Africa. We shall make every effort to assist you in discharging your duties successfully. At the same time, I take pleasure in thanking your predecessor, Mr. Valery Loshchinin, the Ambassador of the Russian Federation, for the excellent work he accomplished during his tenure.

The delegation of my country associates itself with the statement made by Morocco on behalf of the Group of 21.

My statement, will focus, first, on the foundations of the legitimacy of negative security assurances; second, on the limited nature of the current assurances; and third, on my country's call for the current regime to be complemented with the necessary assurances.

(Mr. Jazairy, Algeria)

First, concerning the political and legal foundations of the issue of negative security assurances, I am convinced that it is just and fair, in fact, it is the right of non-nuclear-weapon States to receive an adequate response to their security concerns that would remove the possibility of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against them. Such assurances are not a kind of favour or concession that is granted by the nuclear-weapon States gratuitously, but a political, legal and ethical obligation borne by these nuclear-weapon States in exchange for the fact that the non-nuclear weapon States have forgone the nuclear option indefinitely. The granting of such assurances remains the first stage of a solution, because the sole guarantee that nuclear weapons will not be used is their total and final elimination, in accordance with the commitment entered into by the nuclear States in that regard. The granting of those assurances is in fact only a measure to rectify an unfair situation which is inseparable from the NPT, a treaty which obliges the non-nuclear weapon States not to seek to acquire such weapons without offering them guarantees that the nuclear-weapon States will not use or threaten to use such weapons.

The question of negative security assurances is of great importance not only in relation to the security concerns of the non-nuclear-weapon States but also in terms of the credibility and effectiveness of the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime as a whole. As long as a nuclear weapon remains in existence alongside policies allowing its use against States that do not possess such weapons, this could create a preventive nuclear dialectic, invoking the need for protection against a nuclear attack from any nuclear State.

Negative security assurances derive their legitimacy from the Charter of the United Nations, in particular Article 2, paragraph 4, of the Charter, which calls upon Member States to refrain from the threat or the use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State. Furthermore, the International Court of Justice in its advisory opinion of July 1996 laid down that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is contrary to the principles of international law which necessarily apply in cases of armed conflict, especially the principles and norms of international humanitarian law, insofar as the effects of these destructive weapons are by their nature indiscriminate and not limited in time. Perhaps it would be useful here to recall the St. Petersburg Declaration - not the G-8 declaration adopted recently, but the St. Petersburg Declaration of 11 December 1868, which states that "the necessities of war ought to yield to the requirements of humanity".

The call for the provision of negative security assurances also emanates from the commitments that the nuclear States themselves have accepted. As an example, and without seeking to be exhaustive, I will mention the Final Document of the United Nations General Assembly special session on disarmament in 1978 and the results of the 1995 and 2000 NPT Review Conferences in this regard, which were adopted by consensus. Today more than at any other time in the past, the question of negative security assurances has become a topical one. Currently we are witnessing very disturbing developments in the field of nuclear policies. There are military doctrines that provide for nuclear weapons to be used even against non-nuclear-weapon States, regarding such actions as acceptable in certain circumstances; the

(Mr. Jazairy, Algeria)

threshold for the use of nuclear weapons has also been lowered. The nuclear States are alone in deciding which would be such circumstances. And what is even worse - the concept of "vital interests" is a vague concept behind which some take refuge to justify the use of such weapons against non-nuclear States, especially in the context of the concept of pre-emptive war. These new circumstances reflect a reduction in the commitments in the field of nuclear security that those States accepted under Security Council resolution 984 (1995).

All these new developments bring me to the second segment of my statement, related to the limited nature of the current assurances. These assurances, important as they are, remain insufficient to respond to the security concerns of the non-nuclear-weapon States. The positive assurances granted under Security Council resolution 255 (1968) do not achieve the objective sought - we even doubt the ability of these assurances to contribute to strengthening international stability and peace. This resolution was adopted in an international security context dominated by the cold war and a bipolar world. It is also a resolution which is unclear, whose fundamental elements are not well expressed. Currently, we doubt the willingness of a nuclear State, for example, to run the risk of nuclear confrontation to protect the security of a non-nuclear State. If such assurances are confined to extending technical and medical assistance to a State suffering after a nuclear attack, we cannot see how such assurances can contribute to the provision of protection and security for non-nuclear States.

Concerning the negative security assurances granted under Security Council resolution 984 (1995), in accordance with the unilateral declarations made by the nuclear States, they are very limited and are no more than mere unilateral declarations that do not fall into the category of an international legal commitment. Moreover, with the exception of China, which undertook not to be the first to use nuclear weapons and also not to use them against non-nuclear weapon States, and did so without conditions, the other four nuclear States placed conditions on their assurances. This leaves the door open to the use of such weapons.

The assurances granted in the context of nuclear-weapon-free zones also suffer from many shortcomings. Not every part of the world is included in this regime. In addition, the assurances granted in the context of these regimes are also subject to conditions.

We are speaking of nuclear-weapon-free zones and we cannot overlook the Middle East region, particularly in the light of the current crisis in that region, as a result of the flagrant Israeli aggression against Palestine and Lebanon, an aggression which is flouting all international customs and laws, including humanitarian law, through the use of internationally banned weapons, an aggression which has cost hundreds of lives and left thousands injured and hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians displaced. Israel is alone in the region in not having acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons; Israel refuses to comply with the decisions of the 1995 and 2000 Review Conferences, which call on it to place its nuclear installations under the safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA); Israel is therefore alone in opposing moves to make the Middle East a nuclear-weapon-free region. Israel continues to ignore all these legal instruments without any kind of pressure being

(Mr. Jazairy, Algeria)

brought to bear on it. Consequently, we call on the international community to shoulder its responsibilities where Israel is concerned and ensure that it accedes to the NPT, thus strengthening the disarmament regime. The fact that Israel is persisting in this attitude is helping to create a dialectic which runs counter to the objectives of non-proliferation, and also to negative security assurances.

Against the background of these shortcomings in the current assurances, I now move to the third point in my statement, relating to my country's call for steps to be taken to complement the current assurances. The receipt of negative assurances by the non-nuclear States, in addition to serving the interests of mankind as a whole, is a legitimate demand, in keeping with Security Council resolution 984 (1995), and achieving this is within our power. The negotiations held between the major Powers and a number of States on limiting the dangers of proliferation highlighted the readiness of those Powers to offer prerogatives and negative security assurances bilaterally. Perhaps it would be beneficial to generalize this logic by providing security assurances under a general international treaty rather than dealing with them case by case. That would help to do away with tensions and would enhance stability.

My country is of the opinion that the best solution lies in the conclusion of a legally binding international treaty whereby the nuclear-weapon States would be forbidden to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against countries which do not possess them. The Conference on Disarmament, the sole multilateral forum authorized to discuss disarmament issues, would be the suitable forum for that purpose. Let us remind you in this regard of the position voiced by the Coordinating Bureau of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the member States of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries at their meeting in May 2006, a position in which a call was made for the conclusion as a matter of priority, in the framework of the Conference on Disarmament, of a legally binding international treaty which would include the provision of negative security assurances to the non-nuclear States. I will also refer to resolution No. 18 adopted by the meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, held last June, at which a call was also made for the conclusion of such a treaty without any conditions or requirements.

I wish to reiterate Algeria's call for the urgent establishment of a subcommittee of the Conference on Disarmament under item 4 of the programme of the Conference on Disarmament, relating to the adoption of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. One of the tasks of such a subcommittee would be to discuss a legally binding international agreement including such assurances, without any conditions or requirements. Any work programme which ignores this issue cannot be approved by my country. We continue to believe that the five Ambassadors' proposal constitutes an excellent basis for reaching an agreement reconciling the security aspirations of the various groups of States. This proposal is of course open to development and modification. In this regard we thank China and the Russian Federation for reiterating their willingness to join a consensus on the proposal and call on the remaining States which have reservations on this proposal also to join in this endeavour in order to start the conversations seriously.

(Mr. Jazairy, Algeria)

Negative security assurances, from the viewpoint of our country, are but a transitional step on the path to criminalization of the use of such weapons in the full sense in the framework of a special treaty on the subject. These weapons of terror - as they are described in the report of the WMD Commission, and it is a lesser description than these weapons deserve - represent a threat to peace and stability, and even for mankind as a whole. In this respect we must cite resolution 1653 adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1961, in which the Assembly reaffirmed that the use of nuclear weapons is a direct violation of the spirit and the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations. In addition, the use of such weapons is of no benefit to mankind, whether the target is a nuclear or a non-nuclear State. In this regard I will refer to an article by Mr. Robert McNamara, and I quote his words:

“To launch [nuclear] weapons against a nuclear-equipped opponent would be suicidal. To do so against a non-nuclear enemy would be militarily unnecessary, morally repugnant and politically indefensible.”

The criminalization of the use of such weapons is a necessary step in order to create a climate which will facilitate the complete prohibition of nuclear weapons, as has been done with other weapons of mass destruction. This will happen only in a multilateral framework which will make it possible to offer negotiated permanent solutions, and in keeping with a conception of collective security which seeks to make international peace and security a reality in the context of the rule of law, and to consolidate a system that will put an end to confrontation and enhance mutual respect, common interests, trust and solidarity.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Algeria for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. I shall now read my country's statement.

The delegation of Senegal associates itself with the statement made by the delegation of Morocco on behalf of the member countries of the G-21, which have reiterated their conviction that the most effective security assurance against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons remains nuclear disarmament and the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons. Today's dangers confirm more than ever the relevance of these aims, the achievement of which will, however, require a strong political will commensurate with the security we all seek. The non-nuclear-weapon States have always aspired to legal measures designed to assure them against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Their definitive renunciation of any ambition to possess nuclear weapons, formalized through their signature of the 1968 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and acknowledged in particularly strong terms by the Security Council in its resolution 255 (1968), ought to have as its corollary the granting of legal guarantees against such weapons by the nuclear-weapon States.

The unilateral statements on granting positive and negative security assurances made in 1995 by the nuclear Powers are indeed of great importance. But they are limited by the conditions attached to the assurances. The concept of “no first use” proposed by one of these nuclear Powers, however, deserves to be a feature of our discussions and our future work. The

(The President)

new requirements of international peace and security require new thinking about international arrangements that can assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. The nature and scope of such arrangements should be appropriate to today's circumstances. It seems to us that a new commitment on negative security assurances which are stronger than, or at least as strong as, those of the 1995 commitment should emerge and would certainly constitute a good starting point for debates based on trust. In this connection, the various resolutions on the question of negative security assurances adopted by the United Nations General Assembly since 1978 could serve as an inspiration and a basis for our future discussions.

With respect to the regional or universal nature of security assurances, the Senegalese delegation believes that the two types of approach are complementary and enhance the non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament regime. It is for this reason that Senegal, which has just completed its domestic process of ratifying the Treaty of Pelindaba on the denuclearization of Africa, adopted in Cairo, Egypt, in 1996, will actively participate in the scheduled negotiations on a legally binding universal instrument on negative security assurances. In this connection Senegal supports the establishment, within the CD, of an ad hoc committee on negative security assurances in order to start negotiations forthwith on this important question within the framework of an agreed work programme.

I now give the floor to the representative of Belarus, Mr. Ivan Grinevich.

Mr. GRINEVICH (Belarus) (translated from Russian): Mr. President, allow me to join other delegations and congratulate you on your appointment to the post of President of the Conference on Disarmament. You can count on the full support of the Belarusian delegation. At the same time, I should also like to wish every success to Ambassador Amina Mohamed as she leaves Geneva and wish her every success in her future career.

Belarus was one of the first States in the world to voluntarily renounce the possibility of possessing nuclear weapons. We believe that the proliferation of nuclear weapons and of the materials and technology required for the manufacture of such weapons, particularly against the background of a growing terrorist threat in today's world, is one of the most serious challenges to international peace and stability. In this connection our country endorses the appeal made by the leaders of the G-8 to all States to fulfil their obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, including IAEA safeguards, and to take effective measures to prevent the unlawful trade in nuclear equipment, technology and materials. While reaffirming our commitment to our non-proliferation obligations, Belarus at the same time makes an appeal not to lose sight of the strategic goal of reducing nuclear arsenals.

The Republic of Belarus, as a non-nuclear-weapon State, attaches particular importance to the idea that the five nuclear-weapon States should grant legally binding security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT. At the same time, our State, which suffered more than any other from the technological disaster of Chernobyl, warns that it is inadmissible to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons to resolve any international dispute.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Belarus for his statement and his kind words. I now give the floor to the representative of Finland, Mr. Teemu Sepponen, who will speak on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. SEPPONEN (Finland): Mr. President, I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the European Union and the acceding countries Bulgaria and Romania. I wish to congratulate you on the assumption of the post of President of the Conference on Disarmament. I can assure you, as well as the incoming CD Presidents, of our full support in your efforts to guide and lead this august body.

The EU welcomes this focused structured debate, dedicated to the issue of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. The issue of negative security assurances remains important on the international disarmament and non-proliferation agenda.

The EU is supportive of the pursuit of consideration of the issue of security assurances to the non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT, and recalls in this context the relevant aspects of decision 2 adopted at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, and of the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference, and bears in mind the current situation. Positive and negative security assurances can play an important role: they can serve both as an incentive to forgo the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction and as a deterrent.

We also call on nuclear-weapon States to reaffirm, in the appropriate forums, the existing security assurances noted by the United Nations Security Council in resolution 984 (1995) and to sign and ratify the relevant protocols on nuclear-weapon-free zones drawn up following the requisite consultations, recognizing that treaty-based security assurances are available to such zones.

The EU acknowledges the importance of the nuclear-weapon-free zones established on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among States of the regions concerned, as elaborated in the guidelines adopted by the UNDC at its 1999 substantive session. Nuclear-weapon-free zones enhance regional and global peace and security and are a means to promote nuclear disarmament, stability and confidence. Implementing nuclear-weapon-free zones is a way of enhancing negative security assurances on a regional basis. The EU welcomes and supports the signature and ratification by the nuclear-weapon States of the relevant protocols to the nuclear-weapon-free zones following completion of the necessary consultations. As contemplated in the guidelines adopted by the UNDC in 1999, every zone is the outcome of specific circumstances and must reflect the diversity of situations existing within in. Every nuclear-weapon-free zone must be a well-defined geographical entity.

In conclusion, the EU stands ready to contribute to the deliberations on the issue of negative security assurances.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Finland for his statement and the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Italy, Mr. Carlo Trezza.

Mr. TREZZA (Italy) (translated from French): Mr. President, my delegation is taking the floor for the first time during your term of office. This is the right time to convey our congratulations and assure you of our support and cooperation.

(continued in English)

My delegation supports the statement just made by the presidency of the European Union and welcomes the possibility of revisiting again the issue of negative security assurances at the CD. This time we do it within the framework of a formal and focused debate, and this is a qualitative evolution with regard to previous discussions. We express our appreciation to you and to the six Presidents for giving us this opportunity.

It is no secret that my delegation is eager to start a negotiation on an FMCT immediately because we believe that the issue of nuclear fissile material is the most urgent nuclear disarmament/non-proliferation matter, which needs to be disciplined today. Let me recall that reinvigorating the CD and early commencement of negotiations on the FMCT were among the priorities of this year's G-8 summit at St. Petersburg. The distinguished representative of the Russian Federation, Ambassador Loshchinin, illustrated the results of that summit in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation and nuclear energy this morning. FMCT enjoys larger consensus and is more mature for negotiation. Nonetheless, we acknowledge that the issue of negative security assurances is of great interest to some delegations, and we respect their position. Moreover, "effective international arrangements" on negative security assurances is one of the items on our agenda.

Some evolution has taken place on this subject in the past months: an interesting discussion on NSAs took place last year at the NPT Review Conference but, as we know, no substantial results were reached at that Conference. Resolution 60/53 of last year's United Nations General Assembly, entitled "Conclusion of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons", like its previous versions, was not consensual. Thirty countries belonging to the CD abstained. Recommendation No. 7 of the report on "weapons of terror", the Blix report, refers to negative security assurances.

Several delegations are of the opinion that the Conference on Disarmament is not necessarily the appropriate venue for dealing with negative security assurances and consider the NPT as a more appropriate forum. We tend to share this point of view, since we believe that only NPT non-nuclear-weapon States in compliance with the Treaty can benefit from these assurances. Let me add that I note with interest that almost all CD members who have spoken so far this morning, including a State not party to the NPT, have recognized the key role of the NPT

(Mr. Trezza, Italy)

for negative security assurances. Although the NPT contains no references to security assurances, decision 2 of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference suggests “further steps” in this field. Such steps “could take the form of an internationally ... binding instrument”.

The fact that the 1995 text mentioned “further steps” is, in our reading, an acknowledgement that some steps in this direction had already been taken. Indeed, security assurances had already been addressed in United Nations Security Council resolution 255 of 19 June 1968, as well as subsequently - and more specifically - in resolution 984, adopted unanimously on 11 April 1995. The legal value of such commitments has sometimes been put into question due, inter alia, to a degree of conditionality which was attached to those engagements by the nuclear-weapon States. However, the fact that these engagements are enshrined in United Nations Security Council resolutions gives them, we believe, a solid legal basis.

In addition - and perhaps more significantly - negative security assurances are granted by nuclear-weapon States within the framework of their legally binding nuclear-weapons-free-zone commitments. As stated by the European Union presidency, “implementing nuclear-weapon-free zones is a way of enhancing negative security assurances on a regional basis”. Other delegations are of the same opinion. I refer, for instance, to paragraph 74 of the Final Document of the Durban Ministerial Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement of 2004, where it is said: “in the context of nuclear-weapon-free zones, it is essential that nuclear-weapon States should provide unconditional assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons to all States of the zone”. Negative security assurances granted in this way do not cover the whole world; as a matter of fact, some of the most significant areas of tension in the world, past or present, do not benefit from such assurances. But the coverage is in constant expansion: we welcome the progress made by Central Asian States, we support the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East based on a consensual resolution of the United Nations General Assembly, and would welcome the early entry into force of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa.

Let me add that, to make progress on negative security assurances, a further option is available and can be explored. I refer to the bilateral and plurilateral dimension in addition to the regional one based on nuclear-weapon-free zones. Negative security assurances have already been granted on a bilateral basis in the past, and could be granted in the future within the framework of possible plurilateral security arrangements.

In conclusion, several options are in front of us. First of all, the framework: should it be the Conference on Disarmament or the NPT? Second, the nature of a commitment: should it be a fully fledged multilateral treaty (which in any case would have the nature of a declaration of intent), the enhancement of the concept through nuclear-weapon-free zones, strengthening the existing Security Council resolutions, or other bilateral and plurilateral options?

(Mr. Trezza, Italy)

As I said at the outset, Italy's priority is and remains an FMCT negotiation, but having in mind the interest of many delegations for the NSA issue - business unfinished, as was said by the distinguished Ambassador of Algeria - we are ready to consider all possible ways to accommodate such an interest. Chapter VII of the rules of procedure, including rule 23, offers several possibilities to develop recommendations on how to deal in a more effective way with the issue of international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. We are ready to consider the option which is most appropriate to allow the CD to get down to substantive work.

Since I have the floor, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Ambassador Amina Mohamed, who is about to finish her assignment in Geneva. She has been an effective and imaginative President of the Conference on Disarmament. She has been key in the organization of the Nairobi Summit of the Ottawa Convention and an excellent colleague. I wish her all the best for her future career. All the best, Amina.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the Ambassador of Italy for his statement and the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Germany, Mr. Albrecht Von Wittke.

Mr. Von WITTKÉ (Germany): Mr. President, since this is the first time that my delegation is taking the floor under your distinguished chairmanship, I would like to extend my sincerest congratulations to you and pledge the full support of my delegation. I would also like to thank the previous CD presidency of Russia for effectively guiding the CD proceedings, allowing in particular for an in-depth discussion of issues related to a preventive arms control process in space.

Turning to the issue at hand in the CD - negative security assurances - it goes without saying that the German delegation fully subscribes to the statement by the EU presidency delivered today.

“We must devalue the currency of nuclear weapons”, the Secretary-General of the United Nations said in this very Council chamber in his impressive address to the Conference on Disarmament on 21 June this year. The WMD Commission, in the so-called Blix report, stresses the need to re-examine and revise nuclear doctrines, recommending three specific measures in this regard.

This is the context within which I would like to present our views on the issue of negative security assurances.

Germany considers negative security assurances as an important issue which should be pursued without further delay. Germany welcomes any effort in this regard.

This position is also in accordance with the EU Strategy against proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, adopted by the European Council on 12-13 December 2003, which states explicitly that “positive and negative security assurances ... can serve both as an incentive to forgo the acquisition of WMD and as a deterrent”.

(Mr. Von Wittke, Germany)

Unilateral security assurances and so-called “positive security assurances” (as contained in United Nations Security Council resolution 255 of 1968) are important first steps, but they are not sufficient, since it is the “legitimate interest of non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT to receive security assurances”, as referred to in United Nations Security Council resolution 984 of 1995.

It is no surprise that the issue of security assurances has been at the heart of the NPT ever since the Treaty’s inception. Having forsworn to manufacture and acquire nuclear weapons, the non-nuclear-weapon States are fully justified in demanding not to be threatened by nuclear weapons. Such assurances should be one of the benefits of adhering to the NPT. The ultimate solution to this issue, of course, is the total elimination of all nuclear weapons under effective international control. Pending the achievement of this goal, efforts towards the conclusion of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States should be pursued.

In the context of the 1995 Extension Conference, as part of the package leading to the indefinite extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the “Principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament” included language on negative security assurances, calling for further steps to be considered to assure NPT non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, and that these steps could take the form of an international legally binding instrument. Non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT have obtained nuclear security assurances under United Nations Security Council resolution 984, approved in April 1995. Germany welcomes the statements of the five nuclear-weapon States of 5 April 1995 that made this resolution possible. However, Security Council resolutions do not amount to international legal instruments.

Germany would also like to recall that in its Final Document, the 2000 NPT Review Conference agreed that “legally binding security assurances by the five nuclear-weapon States to the non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime”. Furthermore, the Conference took note of “the establishment in March 1998 by the Conference on Disarmament of the Ad Hoc Committee on effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use, or threat of use, of nuclear weapons”. In accordance with article VII of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, legally binding treaties on nuclear-weapon-free zones have been concluded that ban nuclear weapons from several regions of the world and therefore constitute an important step towards a nuclear-weapon-free world. They provide an important means for addressing non-nuclear-weapon States’ security concerns. This has to be further pursued, especially since some of the security-wise sensitive regions of the world are not yet covered by nuclear-weapon-free-zone provisions. NWFZ treaties should be complemented by effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Germany has consistently supported relevant resolutions in the United Nations General Assembly.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Germany for his statement and the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, Mr. Chang Dong-hee.

Mr. CHANG (Republic of Korea): Mr. President, as this is the first time my delegation has taken the floor during your presidency, I would like to convey my heartfelt congratulations to you on your assumption of the post of President of this august body. I hope that the momentum we have built up under the new initiative of the 2006 presidencies will be further carried forward under your able leadership. My delegation takes this opportunity to assure you of our full support and cooperation.

I would also like to commend Ambassador Loshchinin of the Russian Federation for his excellent stewardship of the CD session, including the successful conclusion of the discussion on PAROS.

As we begin the discussion on NSAs, my delegation would like to remind you once again that the non-proliferation regime will work best when the causes of proliferation are adequately addressed. Insecurity, real or perceived, is likely to be, in most cases, one of the key motives or pretexts for the development of nuclear-weapons capabilities.

Consequently, it is quite natural that the international community should seek ways to alleviate these security concerns in order not to give certain States, regardless of their membership of the NPT, any motive or excuse to pursue nuclear-weapons programmes.

As indicated in its opening statement at the seventh NPT Review Conference in 2005 and in the working paper submitted to it, the Republic of Korea supported the concept of negative security assurances as a practical means of reducing the sense of insecurity. My delegation believes that nuclear-weapon States should provide strong and credible security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States that faithfully meet their NPT and other safeguards obligations.

Security assurances provided by nuclear-weapon States will likely further strengthen the non-proliferation regime per se as they would further dissuade States from acquiring nuclear weapons and they would be conducive to building confidence among States parties. In this vein, we also recognize the value of providing enhanced security assurances and other incentives to those States that voluntarily accept additional non-proliferation commitments beyond the parameters of the NPT.

On the other hand, my delegation also understands that there is a divergence of views over whether the CD is the right venue to pursue this issue, or whether it is still a relevant issue to be discussed, considering the evolving nature of the current international political environment.

Given all the various viewpoints on NSAs, we believe it is necessary for the CD to look into this issue in a comprehensive manner, taking into account both the necessity of providing security assurances and evolving political realities. At this juncture, it would be appropriate to

(Mr. Chang, Republic of Korea)

provide the CD with a “discussion mandate” on this issue, as outlined in the “food for thought” paper proposed by the Dutch presidency. My delegation sincerely hopes that the outcome of our focused debate could lead us to the next possible step for achieving the stated goals at the CD.

This year we embarked on our discussions in the Conference on Disarmament with a sense of renewed purpose in the hope of finding a workable solution that would put the CD back on track after years of drift. The common approach taken by this year’s six Presidents, in particular the unprecedented year-long timetable for the CD, is not just an initiative by some but a reflection of the collective will of member States to revitalize this sole multilateral negotiating forum in the disarmament field.

The focused in-depth debates during the course of the last two sessions provided us with a fresh opportunity to listen to each other and look into the issue at hand in a more substantive manner. The priority issues of member States have been identified and new proposals and ideas have been put forward for our consideration.

As stated on previous occasions, my delegation attaches the highest priority to the early commencement of negotiations on the FMCT. We welcome the draft mandate and treaty text of the FMCT tabled by the United States delegation, and hope that they will serve as a useful basis for such negotiations.

As we embark on the last part of this year’s session, my delegation firmly believes that we should go the extra mile to find a formula under which the CD could begin negotiations at an early date. The CD is not a place where we just sit and talk for the sake of talking, but rather it should serve as a forum for actual negotiations to seek ways and means to make the world a better and a safer place to live in.

Before concluding, let me join previous speakers in expressing my sincere wishes for good health and success to Ambassador Mohamed, who is leaving us after long service to this Conference.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea for his statement and the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Switzerland, Mr. Jürg Streuli.

Mr. STREULI (Switzerland) (translated from French): Mr. President, allow me first of all to congratulate you on taking the Chair of the CD and express the full support of my delegation. I would like to address four specific problems linked to negative security assurances.

Firstly, it is clear from the Security Council resolutions, the statements by nuclear-weapon States and agreements on nuclear-weapon-free zones that negative security assurances are generally accompanied by reservations on the part of the nuclear-weapon States. These reservations relate to the right of these States to use nuclear weapons in certain

(Mr. Streuli, Switzerland)

circumstances. In practice, this means that the nuclear-weapon States do not accept an absolute prohibition on the use or the threat of the use of such weapons. Consequently, my country believes that the negative security assurances provided by the nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT are insufficient.

Secondly, the decision by certain nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT to earmark funds for the development of nuclear weapons - a decision which, in our view, runs counter to the spirit of article VI of the NPT - makes the adoption of negative security assurances even more essential.

Thirdly, we support the generalized establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones like those in Latin America, the Caribbean, the South Pacific, South-East Asia and Africa, and the zone mentioned in the Middle East resolution of 1995, or the zone taking shape in Central Asia. However, Switzerland believes that countries which, like mine, are located outside nuclear-weapon-free zones and have never possessed nuclear weapons cannot benefit from the negative security assurances provided in the context of regional agreements. These countries are therefore faced with unequal treatment.

Fourthly, there is the difficult and complex question of negative security assurances provided by States which are not party to the NPT but which are assumed to possess nuclear weapons. In this respect, it is clear that the negative security assurances provided in the context of the NPT represent a solution which is not entirely satisfactory.

In conclusion, my delegation believes that the non-nuclear-weapon States which are parties to the NPT have a legitimate right to receive a legally binding commitment from the nuclear-weapon States not to use or threaten to use such weapons against them. It is clear that only States which fully comply with their obligations under the NPT can claim such a right. We are convinced that the negotiation and conclusion of an international agreement on negative security assurances would strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime and would have the effect of promoting the universality of the NPT. Without determining the framework of such negotiations in advance, it seems to us that the most appropriate forum for the negotiation of such an instrument would undoubtedly be the Conference on Disarmament. The CD is the only negotiating forum on multilateral disarmament which has among its members all the nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT as well as the non-parties to the NPT which are assumed to possess nuclear weapons.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the Ambassador of Switzerland for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Myanmar, Mr. Nyunt Swe.

Mr. SWE (Myanmar): Mr. President, I should like first of all to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of this important forum. I wish to assure you of our full support and cooperation in the exercise of your functions. My delegation hopes that under your wise and able leadership our discussions will bring about tangible results that will enable us to move forward in our work.

(Mr. Swe, Myanmar)

Today, I should like to present Myanmar's position on negative security assurances (NSA). As a matter of fact, this consistent position of Myanmar has on several occasions been stated by my delegation both in the CD as well as in the other disarmament forums.

My delegation associates itself with the statement of the G-21 delivered on behalf of the Group by our colleague from Morocco on effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

Myanmar believes that nuclear disarmament should be accorded the highest priority on the international agenda for arms control and disarmament. The continued existence of nuclear weapons poses a grave threat to mankind. It is our firm conviction that the only effective defence against nuclear weapons is the total elimination of these weapons. We reiterate our call for full implementation of the 13 Practical Steps outlined in the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference for systematic and progressive efforts to implement article VI of the NPT. These are the benchmarks with which we should assess the progress made by the nuclear-weapon States to fulfil their commitments in the field of nuclear disarmament. However, an objective assessment of the implementation of these benchmarks shows virtually no progress. Pending the achievement of this goal, it is imperative that nuclear-weapon States put in place effective measures for prevention of the outbreak of nuclear war among themselves and effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

Effective international arrangements or agreement on negative security assurances (NSA) is a question of the utmost importance in its own right. We consider that such a step will guarantee the security of non-nuclear-weapon States and will enhance international security as well. In addition, the importance of NSA lies in the fact that effective international arrangements or agreement on NSA and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) constitute two of the most crucial elements of an effective NPT regime. We regard the NPT as a cornerstone of the global regime of nuclear non-proliferation and an essential foundation of global nuclear disarmament. Without these two vital elements, the NPT will neither be viable nor sustainable.

States parties to the NPT which have voluntarily given up the nuclear-weapon option not only deserve, but have the legitimate right, to receive such security assurances. In order to receive such assurances, we strongly favour a legally binding international instrument on security assurances.

The realization of a universal and legally binding instrument has been taken up at various international forums, the most recent being the 2005 NPT Review Conference held last year. Unfortunately, up to now, nothing concrete has come out of these meetings. We share the view of many non-nuclear-weapon States that there is a need for greater balance between the implementation of disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. These two obligations are interrelated and mutually reinforcing pillars of the NPT.

(Mr. Swe, Myanmar)

Initiatives and efforts have been made by many non-nuclear-weapon States on NSA. My country, together with Nigeria and the Sudan, tabled a proposal on a draft protocol on security assurances to the Treaty at the First PrepCom for the 2000 NPT Review Conference. In addition, there are also other proposals by other States. These all could serve as a useful basis for future discussions.

In conclusion, we also wish to reiterate the urgent need to reach an early agreement on effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

While I have the floor, I should like to take the opportunity to join other speakers in saying farewell to Ambassador Amina Mohamed and express our best wishes for her future endeavours.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Myanmar for his statement and the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Canada, Mr. Paul Meyer.

Mr. MEYER (Canada): Mr. President, let me first congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency, and may we all under your stewardship have this Conference finally yield some edible fruit. Let me also add my voice to colleagues in bidding farewell to Amina Mohamed. Obviously, we wish her all the very best in future endeavours. Amina, you are a bright star against the frequently dark skies of the Geneva diplomatic cosmos.

The P6 structured discussions have demonstrated the extent to which the Conference on Disarmament members are committed to undertaking substantive work in this Conference. I think these discussions have reaffirmed that CD members are ready and indeed eager to get down to work. They've also provided a glimpse of a potential new path forward.

Based on the interventions to date in these discussions, it's become increasingly clear to our delegation that there's a strong interest in seeing the Conference negotiate a fissile material cut-off treaty and continue discussions on nuclear disarmament and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. As such, it seems that the time is right to do just that - launch negotiations on the FMCT without preconditions - and, at the same time, to continue discussions on nuclear disarmament and PAROS.

I would like now to turn briefly to where I think the issue of security assurances could fit within this construct. Canada thinks that the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty would be the best and most logical forum and framework for discussions of security assurances, as these assurances are a key benefit of adherence to the Treaty for non-nuclear-weapon States. Nonetheless, in a spirit of compromise and constructive engagement, and with a view to seeing progress in the CD, which has long had this issue on its agenda, we could also accept consideration of security assurances within the context of this Conference. In this regard,

(Mr. Meyer, Canada)

Canada recognizes the importance of security assurances for many States and believes that the CD might at this time best advance the issue of security assurances as part of a broader discussion of nuclear disarmament. While we remain flexible as to how the CD approaches this matter, we recognize the need for it to be adequately addressed.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the Ambassador of Canada for his statement and the kind words he addressed to the Chair. It is already past 1.15 p.m. We have reached the end of the list of speakers for today. Is there any other delegation which wishes to take the floor at this stage? Apparently not. The next plenary meeting will be held on Tuesday, 8 August 2006 at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 11.25 a.m.